

American Lobster Research Program

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC)

Funding Opportunity Title: American Lobster Research Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006355

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, March 19, 2020.

Funding Opportunity Description: The American lobster (*Homarus americanus*) is one of the most iconic modern American fisheries and total U.S. landings of lobster have steadily increased over the past 35 years. The American lobster fishery is one of the largest and most valuable fisheries along the Atlantic coast. In 2017, the American lobster fishery was the third highest value U.S. commercial species, valued at \$594 million, behind salmon and crabs.

Rising ocean temperatures have caused global fish population distribution shifts, and studies suggest warming temperatures may also directly impact the migration, growth, maturity, and natural mortality of American lobster. Of equal concern are potential impacts to lobster larval mortality due to ecosystem and food web changes. Lobster habitat is also changing, although the degree to which is unknown.

These changes present threats to the American lobster fishery in the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and southern New England. Although lobster populations and landings in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank have been increasing since the late 1990s, young-of-year surveys began showing declines in 2012. The state of Maine, where more than seventy-five percent of lobsters harvested in the US were landed in 2017, continued to see lobster landings decrease below the five-year average in October of 2019. Gaps in scientific knowledge and economic uncertainties, such as recent regulatory adjustments regarding Atlantic herring, a primary bait for lobster, continue to drive the need for research to enhance understanding and investigate how these factors impact the American Lobster fishery.

Both researchers and industry are already observing changes in maturation and growth in the Gulf of Maine lobster population. The 2015 stock assessment found that while the Gulf of Maine

and Georges Bank stock was at record high abundance, there has been a decline in settlement in recent years - a potential sign of poor future recruitment. Changes in the spatial distribution of the stock such as increased migration between inshore and offshore habitat are also not well-understood. While traditionally much of the lobster fishery has been located in nearshore areas, there is also a need to better understand the growing offshore fishery. As the fishery adapts to the effects of environmental change, further research is needed to understand the potential economic and ecological implications of those changes for the ecosystem and fishing communities that rely on the resource.

This program will support research to address critical gaps in knowledge about how the American Lobster and its fishery is being impacted by environmental change. It is informed by listening sessions with regional fishing industry stakeholders, state and federal fisheries managers, and university, state and federal fisheries researchers.

Research topics suitable for study on American lobster under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) should have a geographic focus on the Gulf of Maine, Georges Banks, and/or southern New England and address one or more of the following: (1) Increased understanding of life history parameters, including but not limited to, growth, maturity, and species interactions; (2) Larval ecology and early biology; (3) Spatial distribution and migration, including but not limited to, habitat and trophic interactions; and/or (4) socio-ecological investigations to inform future management decisions, including but not limited to, research exploring bait alternatives to herring and their implications for the lobster fishery.

Pending appropriation of funds, Sea Grant anticipates awarding between five to ten research projects totaling between \$1 million and \$2 million dollars in FY2020. Projects must have a maximum duration of two years.

The American Lobster Research Program funded seven projects in FY19. A list of these projects can be found here: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/News/Article/ArtMID/1660/ArticleID/2753/Sea-Grant-awards-2-million-to-advance-understanding-of-American-lobster-support-industry>

The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) was enacted by U.S. Congress in 1966 (amended in 2008, Public Law 110-394) to support leveraged federal and state partnership that harness the intellectual capacity of the nation's universities and research institutions to solve problems and generate opportunities in coastal communities.

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006355. Additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application are provided in the Sea Grant General Application Guide available at:

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>)

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Recent research has produced a mixed picture about the current and future state of the American Lobster fishery. Gaps in scientific understanding and economic implications further complicate resource managers' abilities to sustainably manage this fishery and adequately plan for its future. Due to the potential for wide-ranging ecological and economic impacts, the National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant)'s American Lobster Initiative will fund a national competition focused on research priorities for American Lobster with a focus on the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and/or southern New England, in accordance with its authorizing legislation, to enhance practical use and conservation of marine resources and create a sustainable economy and environment (33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq., as amended).

B. Program Priorities

It is a priority of the American Lobster Research Program to fund a robust and diverse suite of research across priority areas to support the practical use, conservation and sustainable management of the American lobster fishery.

Research topics suitable for study on American lobster under this NOFO should have a geographic focus on the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and/or southern New England and address one or more of the following: (1) Increased understanding of life history parameters, including but not limited to, growth, maturity, and species interactions; (2) Larval ecology and early biology; (3) Spatial distribution and migration, including but not limited to, habitat and trophic interactions; and/or (4) socio-ecological investigations to inform future management decisions, including but not limited to, research exploring bait alternatives to herring and their implications for the lobster fishery.

This opportunity falls under the following NOAA Mission Goals: (1) Climate adaptation and mitigation; (2) Healthy Oceans; and (3) Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the National Sea Grant College Program Act of 1966, as amended (33 USC 1121 et seq.).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to the availability of funding, this announcement describes how eligible applicants should apply for NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006355. Sea Grant anticipates funding between five to ten research projects totaling between \$1 million and \$2 million dollars. The duration of proposed projects must not exceed two years.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards, or that any Application will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive full funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is September 1, 2020, with projects to be completed by August 31, 2022.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements are used if the proposed project includes substantial NOAA involvement as described in the award. For the American Lobster Research Program, examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include communicating and coordinating with the National Sea Grant Office and the Lobster Regional Extension Program through meetings held twice per year as part of Sea Grant's American Lobster Initiative. For more information, contact the competition manager at oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible and encouraged to participate in this funding opportunity: any individual; any public or private corporation, partnership, or other association or entity (including any Sea Grant College, Sea Grant Institute or other institution); or any State, political subdivision of a State, Tribal government or agency or officer thereof. Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use, nor can the value of such

assets be used as match.

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by recruiting, retaining and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives and ways of thinking. We encourage applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, and income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this opportunity.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the federal funding request must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted. The cumulative match at the end of each year of the grant must not fall below 50 percent of the cumulative federal request up to that point. In-kind contributions directly supporting this Application may count towards this matching requirement. See the Sea Grant General Application Guide (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>) for more information.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available online and can be downloaded from www.grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006355. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of these required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to include these elements will result in rejection of the application without review.

Additional guidance on Sea Grant-specific form completion can be found here: Sea Grant

General Application Guide

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>)

The applicant must redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII that must be redacted from the application includes social security number, and date of birth.

Required Elements:

1. Project Narrative

The Application must include the following documents. It is strongly encouraged that proposals follow the sequence below.

a) Project Proposal Narrative

- Abstract (it does not count against page limits)
- Introduction/background/justification
- Project objectives
- General work plan and milestones
- Anticipated outcomes
- Statement of relevancy
- References and literature citations (they do not count against page limits)
- Short CVs (2 pages each) for each principal and co-principal investigator (they do not count against page limits)
- Letters of Intent/Support (they do not count against page limits)
- Figures (they do not count against page limits)

The project proposal narrative itself must not exceed 15 pages.

b) Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)

An abbreviated environmental compliance questionnaire must be filled out for the project described in the application. The Questionnaire can be found here:

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>. Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>).

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government

permits and approval for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposed activities to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests for, or approval of required environmental permits must be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA staff to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the Application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division along with the recommendation for funding for selected Applications. Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact must furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

c) Data Management Plan and Data Management Guidance:

https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf

i. 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.

ii. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

2. Budget Narrative

Each individual project included within the application must also include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification Narratives) in the following format and sequence:

a) Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)

A required form used to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the overall proposal and project described in this application. Guidance on filling out the form is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document. The following are required:

- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 Forms describing the yearly and total budgets of the proposal overall (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, and Years 1-2).
- A completed Sea Grant 90-4 Form covering the full duration of the project in the application.
- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 Forms for the yearly and total budget of any sub-awards associated with each project in the application (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, and Years 1-2).

b) Budget Justification

A budget justification narrative for each year of the projects described in the application that explains budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. This document should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate. Guidance on completing the justifications is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>).

3. Overall Application

In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the Application package on Grants.gov or on the Sea Grant website (links found below). These include:

a) SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)

This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period (Sept 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2022), as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution’s accurate EIN and DUNS and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

b) SF-424A Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006)

This form, titled “Instructions for Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs,” must describe the entire two-year funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Federal and match years should each have their own column. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).

c) SF-424B Assurances (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007)

The form, titled “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs,” must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

d) CD-511 (Grants.gov, US DOC)

The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

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 of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>.

Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2013), which may be accessed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03addd6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1300&rgn=div8

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, March 19, 2020. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. ET.)

Please note: Validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Applicants should consider this process in developing their submission timeline. For eligible applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the National Sea Grant College Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

F. Funding Restrictions

The Sea Grant Act at 33 USC 1124(d)(2) states: "No payment under any grant or contract under this section may be applied to:

- a) the purchase or rental of any land; or
- b) the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel; except that payment under any such grant or contract may be applied to the short- term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings which are in direct support of any Sea Grant Program or project and may, if approved by the Secretary, be applied to the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures, or to the rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of activities under any Sea Grant Program or project."

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants successful to this opportunity will work with Sea Grant's American Lobster Initiative and its Lobster Regional Extension Program to coordinate and communicate on the progress of their research. Successful applicants will be required to participate in project

progress meetings held twice per year and engage with the Lobster Regional Extension Program, as applicable, to extend their research findings to stakeholders. For more information, contact the competition manager at oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov.

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (25 percent). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this opportunity, program goals are the Program priorities listed in Section I.B.

2. Technical/scientific merit (25 percent). 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 as well as data management considerations.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (20 percent). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. Project costs (20 percent). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

5. Outreach and Education (10 percent). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For this opportunity, this includes coordination and communication with the National Sea Grant College Program's American Lobster Initiative and its Lobster Regional Extension Program. For more information, contact the competition manager at oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications will be individually ranked in accordance with the above criteria and assigned scores by an independent review panel. Panel members

will provide individual evaluations of applicants, and their ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the applications. The selecting official shall award in the rank order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the selection factors provided provided in Section V.C. The selecting official shall make final recommendations for award to the Grants officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

The proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will also be reviewed by the Federal Program Officer to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions. The Federal Program Officer, NEPA Staff Lead, or Grants Specialist may contact the program to discuss questions about the environmental effects, merit, or administrative correctness of the application, and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the grant preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

- Availability of funding.

- Balance/distribution of funds:

 - geographically

 - by type of institution

 - by type of partners

 - by research priority

 - by project types

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

- Program priorities and policy factors.

- Applicant's prior award performance.

- Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to start September 01, 2020.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) will notify each unsuccessful applicant.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(1) 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>.

(2) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 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>.

(3) Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the 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>. Current Department of Commerce Standard Terms are here: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2009%20October%202018.pdf. Current Department of Commerce Standard Terms are here: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf

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

(5) 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.

(6) 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.

(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) Data Sharing Plan

a) 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.

b) Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include 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.

c) 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.

d) 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.

(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 (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.

(10) 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.

(11) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA-Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at:
http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities_assault_policy.html.

C. Reporting

Financial reports are submitted semi-annually via Grants Online. Performance progress reports should be submitted annually via Grants Online. Awardees will coordinate and communicate progress of their research with other elements of Sea Grant's American Lobster Initiative like the Lobster Regional Extension Program, so, as appropriate, project objectives and research results can be shared through regional and national platforms such as Sea Grant's PIER database and national website. Awardees will also work with Sea Grant's Lobster Regional Extension Program to participate in project progress meetings held twice per year.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (31 U.S.C. 6101) includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000.

Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

Contact the American Lobster Initiative Lead, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Room 11839, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Tel: (301) 734-1076; E-mail: oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

Recipients are required to use the National Sea Grant Planning Implementation and Evaluation Reporting (PIER) project database to communicate with the National Sea Grant Office on activities relating to this award. This includes tracking progress and impacts, in addition to performance metrics.

Once successful applications have been selected, applicants will need to provide the information requested in the Sea Grant 90-2 into the PIER project database. Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the National Sea Grant College Program public website (<http://seagrants.noaa.gov>).

The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt.

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 the 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 Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive

personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, 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.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.