

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC)

Funding Opportunity Title: Coastal Zone Management Projects of Special Merit Competition - Fiscal Year 2016

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2016-2004595

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.419, Coastal Zone Management Administration Awards

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on December 18, 2015.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise eligible applicants that NOAA is soliciting proposals for competitive funding under the Coastal Zone Management Act's (CZMA) Enhancement Program Projects of Special Merit, authorized under Section 309 of the CZMA (16 U.S.C. §1456b). The objective of Section 309 assistance is to encourage each State or Territory with a federally-approved coastal management program (CMP) to continually improve its program in specified areas of national importance. The intent of Projects of Special Merit (PSM) funding is to offer CMPs the opportunity to develop innovative projects that further their approved enhancement area strategies and focus on the following national enhancement area priorities: Hazards, and Ocean and Great Lakes Resources (with a focus on comprehensive planning). Any CMP that has been approved by NOAA pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. §1455) and has an approved 2016-2020 Section 309 Assessment and Strategy that contains at least one strategy addressing one or more of the priority enhancement areas is eligible to apply for this competition. Coastal Zone Management Program Regulations at 15 C.F.R. Part 923 apply to this Announcement, and program policies and procedures are further implemented through the provisions in this announcement .

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objective of Section 309 is to encourage States or Territories with federally-approved coastal management programs (CMPs) to continually improve their programs. The intent of Projects of Special Merit (PSM) funding is to offer CMPs the opportunity to develop innovative projects that further their approved enhancement area strategies and focus on national priorities. The Secretary is authorized to make grants to a CMP for the development and submission of Federally approved program changes that support attainment of one or more enhancement area objectives established at 15 C.F.R. § 923.122.

PSM funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to CMPs. Proposed projects shall further the objectives of an approved enhancement area strategy but shall not be essential to meeting specific benchmarks in the strategy. PSM projects shall not be dependent on long term levels of funding to succeed. Coastal Zone Management Program Regulations at 15 C.F.R. Part 923 apply to this Announcement, and program policies and procedures are further implemented through the provisions in this announcement .

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must focus on one or more of the following priority enhancement area objectives:

- Hazards: Preventing or significantly reducing threats to life and property by eliminating development and redevelopment in high-hazard areas, managing development in other hazard areas, and anticipating and managing the effects of potential sea level rise and Great Lakes level change.

- Ocean and Great Lakes Resources: Planning for the use of ocean and Great Lakes resources. Ocean and Great Lakes Resources projects submitted to this competition should be designed to advance comprehensive ocean and Great Lakes planning efforts (e.g., planning initiatives that address multiple ocean and Great Lakes resources and uses rather than single-sector or issue plans).

Funds may be used for any of the following allowable uses which support the attainment of a program change:

- Project personnel costs;

- Supplies and overhead;
- Travel;
- Equipment (pursuant to relevant OMB guidance);
- Projects, studies and reports; and
- Pass-through or contractual costs including contracts, sub-awards, personal service contracts with individuals, memoranda of agreement/understanding, and other forms of passthrough funding for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Section 309.

Funds may not be used for land acquisition or construction projects.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1456b).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for PSM is approximately \$1.5 million or 15% of Section 309 funds for FY 2016. Funding is subject to availability of FY 2016 appropriations. The allocation may vary depending on the total Section 309 funds available. It is estimated that approximately 6-15 proposals ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 will be selected. The maximum amount that may be requested for the federal share of a PSM is \$250,000. Funds not allocated for PSM awards will be returned to the weighted formula allocation under Section 309.

B. Project/Award Period

The standard financial assistance award period for FY 2016-funded projects is 18 months. NOAA may extend an award up to an additional 18 months, for a maximum performance period of three years if circumstances warrant, such as unforeseen circumstances that prevent the project from being completed within the original period of performance. In order to qualify for an extension, award recipients must be in good standing (i.e., up-to-date on all progress and financial reports), demonstrate progress during the initial period of performance, and be able to demonstrate that additional time is likely to result in

successful completion of the project. It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have an award start date of October 1, 2016.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Projects will be funded as cooperative agreements . A cooperative agreement is used when substantial involvement of the federal government during performance of the proposed activity is anticipated. The recipient can expect substantial collaboration, participation, and/or intervention in the management of the project by NOAA. Some examples of substantial involvement by NOAA include the ability to halt an activity immediately if detailed performance specifications are not met; NOAA specifying direction or redirection of scope of work due to the interrelationships with other projects; NOAA collaborating with the recipient by working jointly with a recipient scientist or technician in carrying out the scope of work, by training recipient personnel, or detailing federal personnel to work on the project; and by NOAA limiting recipient discretion with respect to scope of work, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operations, and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners. If federal agencies are collaborators, applicants must provide detail on the expected level of federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to partnership services; serving in a review capacity; or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Any State or Territorial CMP that has been approved by NOAA pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1455) is eligible under this announcement if the requirements established at 15 C.F.R. § 923.121 are met. Specifically, applicants must have an approved Assessment and Strategy for the 2016-2020 assessment period which includes at least one strategy for one or more of the priority enhancement areas identified in Section I.B of this federal funding opportunity (FFO). In addition to strategies that were originally approved as part of a State or Territory's Assessment and Strategy, approved strategies also include strategies that were added or substantially modified and approved by NOAA's Office

for Coastal Management prior to the closing date of the competition. See 15 C.F.R. § 923.121 for all requirements.

The designated lead agency for implementing each approved CMP is eligible to submit projects for funding under this competition. For the purposes of this competition, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission is an eligible applicant. Eligible applicants may submit a proposal on behalf of State agency partners within the approved State CMP network, if applicable. Local governments and nonprofits may participate as partners on the proposed projects; however, projects should be focused upon enhancing the approved State CMP. Each applicant may submit no more than two applications for consideration under this competition.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Pursuant to 15 C.F.R. § 923.124 (a)(1), there are no match requirements under this competition.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

As noted above, each applicant may submit no more than two applications for consideration under this competition.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application materials are available online at: <http://www.grants.gov> (Grants.gov). If this is not feasible, application packages shall be requested from the competition manager: Elizabeth Mountz, Office for Coastal Management, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301-713-3155 ext. 148, Elizabeth.Mountz@noaa.gov.

During the competition period, eligible applicants (the designated lead agency for implementing each approved CMP) should submit any questions regarding the competition via email to the competition manager listed above. Questions and answers will be compiled on a bi-weekly basis, at a minimum, and sent out to the CMP program managers' email list in order for all potential applicants to have access to the same level of information. All competition policy-related questions should be submitted to NOAA by two weeks prior to the application deadline in order to allow NOAA to respond in a timely manner for the information to be useful for all potential applicants developing proposals. NOAA will not answer any competition policy-related questions submitted in the two weeks prior to the

application deadline. Competition policy-related questions include inquiries on project eligibility, eligible costs, and project narrative requirements. However, during this period, NOAA will continue to assist applicants with questions regarding the application submittal process, such as resolving issues related to Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications should contain the following items described under 15 C.F.R. § 923.126(b):

(1) A clear and concise description of the project explaining the relationship of the project to the CMP's approved Assessment and Strategy and how it will support an approved enhancement area strategy;

(2) A specific timetable;

(3) A description of the activities that will be undertaken to complete the project and by whom;

(4) Identification of any sub-awardees, pursuant to 15 C.F.R. §923.94(b)(1)(iii);

(5) An estimate of total costs; and

(6) Documentation of fiscal needs and technical needs, if any:

- Fiscal needs: information on the current State budget (surplus or deficit), the budget of the applying agency (increase or decrease over previous fiscal year), future budget projections, and what efforts have been made by the applying agency, if any, to secure additional State funds from the Legislature and/or from off-budget sources such as user fees; and

- Technical needs: identification of the technical knowledge, skills and equipment that are needed to carry out proposed projects and that are not available to the applying agency, and what efforts the applying agency has made, if any, to obtain the trained personnel and equipment it needs (for example, through agreements with other State agencies).

The proposal should be no more than 12 pages, single-spaced, using 12-point font. Any additional pages past this 12 page limit will not be reviewed or considered by the merit reviewers. See Section V. Application Review for detailed information on how applications will be evaluated. The 12-page limit does not include the proposal title page and any appendices. Appendices shall be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, detailed sub-award budget information, indirect cost rates, letters

of support, resumes or Curriculum Vitae (CVs), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information, references, detailed descriptions of the qualifications of any known sub-awardee or contractor, maps, and the data/information sharing plan referenced in Section IV.B.10.d. of this FFO, if the application proposes to produce environmental data). The data/information sharing plan should be included as an appendix and does not need to be included within the project narrative. The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices shall not exceed five megabytes in storage space. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

- a. Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 (7/3 version or newer)
- b. Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A
- c. Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- d. Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- e. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, each application package should include the following required elements:

1. PROJECT TITLE

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Applicant Contact Information:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Principal Project Manager:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Project Partners (if any):

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Geographic Area(s) Affected:

Total Cost: \$

Did you submit an additional PSM proposal for consideration? ___ Yes ___ No

3. PROJECT OF SPECIAL MERIT ENHANCEMENT AREAS

Identify the enhancement area under which you would like this proposal to be considered (list all that apply: Coastal Hazards, and/or Ocean and Great Lake Resources).

4. ASSOCIATED PROGRAM CHANGE

a. Identify the approved strategy that the proposed PSM will support (please use the exact title as approved in the Assessment and Strategy):

b. List the type(s) of program change that the supported strategy was approved to result in, or implement (list all that apply):

- A change to coastal zone boundaries; new or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;
- New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;
- New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;
- New or revised Special Area Management Plans (SAMP) or plans for Areas of Particular Concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,
- New or revised guidelines, procedures and policy documents which are formally

adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CMP program policies to applicants, local government and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Provide a clear and concise description of the project that explains the relationship of the proposed project to the CMP's approved Assessment and Strategy and how the proposed project will further all or part of a program change that the CMP has identified in its Strategy. In addition, the project description should include:

- clear and specific project goals, measurable objectives, and outcomes;
- how the project will further the goals and objectives of the approved 309 strategy in an innovative way;
- project activities that will be undertaken and by whom (including the identification of any sub-awardees), including stakeholder and public engagement in the development of project outcomes;
- the likelihood for success of the project approach to achieve the identified goals, objectives, and outcomes; and
- project evaluation components and activities to communicate or disseminate project outcomes.

6. BENEFITS TO COASTAL MANAGEMENT

Describe the anticipated effect(s) and outcome(s) of the PSM including

- a clear articulation of the scope and value in improved coastal management and resource protection;
- benefits to the public;
- timeframe in which project outcome(s) are expected to result in implementable management improvements; and
- transferability to other CMPs.

7. FISCAL AND TECHNICAL NEEDS AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a) Fiscal and Technical Needs: Provide a brief description of the fiscal and technical needs of the State related to the proposed project

b) Past Performance under the Section 309 Program: Provide a brief description of the CMP's past performance and success in achieving the expected results of Section 309 strategies that are similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project.

8. PROJECT WORK PLAN

Provide a work plan that includes the major tasks or actions necessary for achieving the goals and outcomes of the proposed project. Briefly describe the capacity of the program to carry out the project including collaboration with partners. The work plan should also identify milestones, outcomes, and a schedule for their completion.

Example Work Plan Format (please duplicate outline as needed for multiple tasks):

Title:

Timeframe:

Description of Activities and Program Capacity:

Milestone(s) and Date of Completion:

Outcome(s) and Date of Completion:

List of Final Products:

9. PROJECT BUDGET

Budget narrative: The budget narrative shall be composed of two parts, a budget table that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package (Standard Form 424-A), and a detailed narrative justification of the budget. Detailed budget guidance provided by the NOAA Grant Management Division is accessible under:
http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-GMD-04.09.2015.pdf

The budget table should detail the federal Section 309 funds required for each task by budget category as described below:

Budget Category	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Total
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Personnel

Fringe

Travel

Subcontract

Indirect

Supplies

Equipment

Other

Total

Please note the following:

-Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. NOAA strongly encourages applicants to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure that your proposal is competitive.

Detailed support for subawards and contracts may be included within the appendices, and would not count towards the application's 12 page limit. If the applicant does not have adequate subaward/contract budget detail within the original application, NOAA will require this information once the project is recommended for funding.

For identified sub-awards and contracts, provide information about the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of known entities receiving funds and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or subaward.

For subawards, include detailed budget information regarding all subawards and indicate the basis for the cost estimates in the narrative. Describe projects or activities to occur and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each identified subaward must include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:

Name of qualified, identified subrecipient, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For "to be determined," describe plans.

Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.

Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.

Criteria for Measuring Accountability. Include reporting schedule.

Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget.

For acquisition contracts, the cost or price, purpose, method of selection, period of performance, scope of work, and criteria for measuring accountability for identified and

planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified or described in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 C.F.R. 200.317-.326.

- PSM funds may not be used to contract with NOAA for products or services. NOAA also cannot 'retain' PSM funds; all PSM funds must be awarded to the state.

The budget narrative also should clearly identify the cost of separable elements of the proposed work and shall identify the elements of the project that the cooperator would recommend for revision or elimination if sufficient funding is not available for all proposed activities.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Equipment purchases also require a lease vs. purchase assessment. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.33 Equipment.

Non-federal applicants should identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, 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 actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any known coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for any portion of travel, prior approval is

required under the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section K.03.c., <http://go.usa.gov/3zVu9>, and therefore, such travel should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in an annual NOAA Grants Management Division workshop for recipients. See <http://go.usa.gov/3zVeH>.

Refer to Section IV.E. of this FFO regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget.

10. APPENDICES

Appendices must be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, detailed budget information, copies of Federally approved indirect cost rates, letters of collaboration, resumes, references, lists of data sources, and maps).

a. Mandatory detailed budget information for each sub-award and contract as described in the Budget Narrative, Section IV.B.9..

b. Letters of Collaboration. All supporting letters from partner organizations that are instrumental to the project should be included in the application package. Letters must clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Letters of collaboration do not need original signatures.

c. Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of two pages of each key investigator.

d. Data Sharing Plan. Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. A Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as an Appendix. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information 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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the evaluation criteria . 2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be

posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

Principal Investigators must indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.

NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html

e. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance-- Under NEPA, NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA.

After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of 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.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/> including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/ceq_regulations/regulations.html or http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf?redirect=301ocm

f. Indirect Cost Rate. If an applicant charging indirect costs has a current Federally-approved indirect cost rate, a copy of the rate approval should be included in the Appendix. If an applicant does not have a rate, see Section IV.E.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, December 18, 2015.

Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration.

Applicants unable to submit their application through Grants.gov may submit a complete application that includes a SF-424 form with original ink signature and date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time on December 18, 2015. Private metered postmarks are unacceptable. Please address all mailed applications to: Elizabeth Mountz, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, N/OCM6, 10th Floor, Room 10652, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Paper applications received more than 5 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed, and applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications are subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPCO) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

E. Funding Restrictions

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives and are determined by reference to relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E. As previously noted, funds may not be used for land acquisition or construction projects.

Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package.

Alternatively, a recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 C.F.R. 200.414. If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

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

F. Other Submission Requirements

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov) and application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the “Apply” function on Grants.gov. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.) Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks or more to complete, and periodic renewals are required. In addition, it may take up to two days until the applicant is notified as to whether NOAA received the application, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. The Grants.gov site contains the application package (forms) and submission directions, and is also where the completed application is submitted.

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.419). Applicants will be able to

download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency.

No email or fax copies will be accepted. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaborations and any letters of support, shall be submitted together in one package.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to build the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. § 6106. Note, to the extent applicable, any applicant 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 and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25, which may be accessed online at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. A Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal

award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

a. Importance and relevance applicability of proposed project to program goals (45 percent).

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed project and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, or State activities. Each application will be judged on the importance of the project to the management of coastal issues in the applicant's State or region and how the CMP will benefit from the project. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- Likelihood that the proposed project would help the State make substantial progress toward achieving the program change(s) as described in the project proposal. (15 points)
- Likelihood that the proposed project would result in improved management of ocean and coastal resources, particularly related to hazards resiliency and advancing comprehensive ocean and Great Lakes planning. (15 points)
- Transferability of project results to solve coastal management issues in other states. (10 points)
- Level of innovation of the proposed project. (5 points)

b. Technical/scientific merit (30 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, objectives, and outcomes. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- Extent to which the project proposal includes clear goals, objectives, outcomes and timetables. (10 points)
- Extent to which the proposed approach is technically sound (i.e., the proposed methods, approaches, and concepts are appropriate given the projects goals, objectives, and desired outcomes) (10 points)
- Degree to which the proposal identifies the State's technical needs and explains how

the proposed project will help meet those needs. (5 points)

- Degree to which there is a meaningful evaluative component to the project to assess the overall success of the project and effectiveness of project outcomes. (5 points)

c. Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (10 percent).

This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary program education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Overall qualification of the applicant and demonstration of past performance. (5 points)

- The project involves the appropriate partners to execute the project, as well as the key personnel from other agencies and institutions partnering on the project with the experience, expertise and/or networks needed to capitalize on available expertise. (5 points)

d. Project costs (5 percent).

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- The reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and with the expected benefits to be achieved. (5 points)

e. 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 understand and protect the Nation's natural resources. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- Engagement of public and project stakeholders in the development of the desired project outcomes (5 points)

- Quality of proposed education and outreach activities to ensure public, other state coastal management programs, and relevant stakeholders are aware of and can benefit from project results. (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in four steps: (1) an initial screening by competition program staff within NOAA's Office for Coastal Management; (2) merit review; (3) selection by the Selecting Official (i.e., Director of the Office for Coastal

Management or the Director's designee), and (4) financial and administrative review and obligation of funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division. The merit review step will involve at least three reviewers per application. The Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based on the ranking of the applications, the evaluations by the merit reviewers, and the selection factors set in V.C., below.

1. Initial Screening. The initial screening will ensure that application packages are timely, eligible, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications that pass this initial screening will be submitted for merit review.

2. Merit Review. Eligible applications for PSM will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weights described in this solicitation by at least three independent peer reviewers through an independent peer mail review and/or an independent peer panel. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer reviewers through mail reviews or on the review panels. If a panel is convened, the panel will be comprised of subject matter experts and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference or electron electronic means. The merit reviewer's ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

3. Selection. The competition program staff will create a ranking of the proposals to be recommended for funding using the merit review or panel review scores, if a panel review is conducted. The reviewer comments, composite project scores, rank order, and a summary of the concerns (if any) identified through the mail and/or panel review process along with information pertaining to selection factors (see below) will be presented to the Selecting Official.

Based on the ranking, merit review written evaluations, and the additional selection factors described below, the Selecting Official will develop a list of projects recommended for funding. Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

4. Grants Management Division (GMD) Processing. The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this announcement. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final and there is no right of appeal.

C. Selection Factors

The final panel ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The competition manager will make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically.
 - b. By type of institutions.
 - c. By type of partners.
 - d. By research 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 as described in Section I of this federal funding opportunity.

5. Applicant's prior award performance.

6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.

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

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA anticipates that award announcements will be made by September 2016. Most awards will have a start date of October 1, 2016, regardless of the start date for a State's annual CMP award. Award start date is dependent on funding availability, the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, NEPA analysis, and documentation supporting any cooperative agreement activities.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by e-mail that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is NOT an official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's grants management system, Grants Online. The CD-450 award cover page is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email that their application was not recommended for funding within 10 business days after the final program office recommendations have been approved by the NOAA GMD.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notice

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this 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

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

3. Financial Assistance Terms and Conditions

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. In addition, award conditions particular to this program, to individual projects, and individual recipients will be developed and added to awards, which may include restrictions on project activity and administration until specified compliance requirements are met. The award terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov>.

4. Limitation of Liability

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 the NOAA Grants Management Division, Grants Officer, it does so at its own risk of not being funded or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for any proposal preparation costs, or for any costs arising if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of other agency priorities. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations,

and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project, obligate any available funds, or provide special fishing privileges.

Funded awards are subject to enforcement and termination provisions under 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.338-.342. 4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). See the NEPA information in Section IV.B. of this announcement.

5. Unpaid or delinquent tax liability.

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

6. Coastal Zone Enhancement Program Requirements

The project must meet the CZMA Section 309 Program Guidance FY 2016-2020 published in June 2014. The Guidance may be accessed online at http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/media/Sect-309_Guidance_June2014.pdf.

7. Confidentiality and Access to Information

The Office for Coastal Management will not release the names of applicants submitting proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out information about NOAA awards < <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/publicSearch/begin.do> > or go through the Freedom of Information Act process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOIA process is online at the following address: <http://www.noaa.gov/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, you should 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) are found at 5 U.S.C 552, 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 you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Reporting

Award recipients are required to provide semi-annual financial and performance reports consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.327-.329 and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Performance reports are required every six months from the time an award starts until it is closed. Performance reports are to be submitted to the NOAA program officer. The standard performance period is 18 months, but may be extended up to an additional 18 months if circumstances warrant. Within 30 days of the conclusion of each six-month period, recipients must submit a report summarizing activities conducted in support of the project during the prior six months. The final comprehensive report must be submitted within 90 days of the conclusion of the award. Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer. NOAA's Grants Management Division will also provide guidance for its semi-annual financial reporting requirements. Each grant recipient will need to demonstrate, through performance and financial reports, that all award conditions have been met before an award can be closed. Financial and performance reporting, as well as all other grant management activities after a grant is awarded, are conducted electronically through NOAA's grants management system, NOAA Grants Online, at: <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/>.

The recipient will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and are up to date. In their final progress report, recipients will be asked to (a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project and products in the coastal management community; and (b) certify that "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)."

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants may be asked to submit an inventory at closeout consistent with 2 C.F.R. Part 200. Administrative requirements for equipment are set out at 2 C.F.R. § 200.313. As applicable, the recipient may submit Form SF-428 (Tangible Personal Property Report) at closeout. The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete an "other" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 .

As applicable, the recipient must report on real property annually and at award closeout, by completing Form SF-429 (Real Property Status Report).

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding the announcement, contact the competition manager: Elizabeth Mountz, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or by phone at 301-713-3155 ext. 148, or via email at Elizabeth.Mountz@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

The National Coastal Zone Management Program web site is at <http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/>.