RESTORE Act
Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program

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

Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: GR-RCE-17-001

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number: 21.015

Key Dates: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis as long as funds are available in an applicant's allocation. This funding opportunity announcement will close on June 5, 2017. A new funding opportunity announcement may be posted again in July 2017, as determined necessary by the Department of the Treasury.

RESTORE Act
Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program
Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

PART 1

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

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

III. **Announcement Type**: Initial

IV. **Funding Opportunity Number**: GR-RCE-17-001

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PART 2

I. Funding Opportunity Description

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

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

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

establish Centers of Excellence, and by those Centers of Excellence for science, technology, and monitoring in one or more of the following disciplines:

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

Eligible applicants issuing subawards to Center(s) of Excellence must establish and implement a program to monitor compliance with its subaward agreements.

II. Federal Award Information

A. Total Funding Availability

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

B. Award Amount

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

C. Anticipated Award Date

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

D. Period of Performance

Eligible applicants may submit one or more applications, each covering a performance period (project period) of one to five years. Applications should be submitted at least 90 days before the requested start date of the award.

E. Funding Instrument Type

Awards will be made as grants to eligible applicants.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are specified by the RESTORE Act and regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 34. Only the following entities may apply for funding under this announcement:

1. The Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council or such administrative agent as it may designate
2. The Florida Institute of Oceanography
3. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board of Louisiana, through the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana (pursuant to 31 CFR 34.702)
4. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
5. The Office of the Governor of the State of Texas, or an appointee of the Office of the Governor

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Each applicant must complete an Operational Self-Assessment and must update the Operational Self-Assessment annually by June 30. Annual Operational Self-Assessments must be reviewed and accepted by Treasury before funds may be awarded for an application under this announcement. The required format and fillable form for the Operational Self-Assessment, as well as instructions for

completing it, may be found on Treasury's RESTORE Act website at https://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/home.aspx.

IV. Application Preparation and Submission Information

A. Application Package

Treasury uses the GrantSolutions.gov system to manage the application submission process, and application packages will only be made available through GrantSolutions.gov at https://www.grantsolutions.gov/gs/. Only eligible applicants, as defined in **Section III**, will be able to register with GrantSolutions.gov. Eligible applicants must register with GrantSolutions.gov and log in using the provided account information in order to access the various funding opportunity announcements and associated application packages available under the RESTORE Act.

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

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

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

B. Content and Form of Application

All applications must be completed and submitted using the application packages provided by GrantSolutions.gov at https://www.grantsolutions.gov/gs. An application must be submitted by the Authorizing Official, previously approved for enrollment and enrolled in GrantSolutions.gov.

Application packages will include the required standard forms and specific documentation required by Treasury. All standard forms are available electronically in GrantSolutions.gov. Please note that the Treasury RESTORE Act forms have changed and are web-based forms in GrantSolutions.gov. Applicants must complete all forms in the GrantSolutions.gov application package and the authorizing official must sign the certification electronically.

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

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

The following items are required:

1. Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.
2. Form SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs.
3. Form SF-424B, Assurances – Non-construction Programs.
4. RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Research Grant Program Application Narrative. *(Completion of the template in GrantSolutions.gov is required.)* The applicant must:
    a. Identify the applicant organization.
    b. Provide information about the competitive selection process, citing relevant state statutes or regulations as applicable.
    c. Describe how public input on Centers of Excellence rules and policies was solicited and considered, and provide relevant documentation of the public review and comment period.
    d. Describe your procedures for managing subrecipients and subawards.
    e. Identify the Center(s) and select the eligible discipline(s) on which the Center(s) will focus.
    f. Provide a scope of work that includes specific tasks, milestones, and related timeframes for the entire project period.
    g. Provide a narrative justifying how the proposed costs within each of the budget categories on the SF-424A listed directly below are necessary, reasonable, allowable, and allocable:
        i. Personnel – This refers to salaries and wages paid to employees of the applicant organization who are directly involved in grant implementation. *This line item does not include personnel hired as subrecipients; those costs are included in the "Contractual" line item.*

ii. Fringe Benefits – This refers to the allowances and services employers provide their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick, or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans.

iii. Travel – This refers to the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the non-Federal entity. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the non-Federal entity's non-federally funded activities and in accordance with the non-Federal entity's written travel reimbursement policies. *This line item does not include a subrecipient's travel expenses; those costs are included in the "Contractual" line item.*

iv. Equipment – This refers to tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000.

v. Supplies – This refers to all tangible personal property other than equipment. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life.

vi. Contractual – This refers to purchases of property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. It is not specific to the legal instrument used, so it may include both subawards and contracts.

vii. Construction - [not applicable]

viii. Other – This refers to direct costs that do not fit any of the aforementioned categories, such as rent for buildings used to conduct grant activities, utilities and/or leased equipment, transportation expenses, tuition for training, etc.

ix. Indirect Costs – This refers to costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect costs must be supported by a current federally approved Indirect Cost Rate. *Please contact Treasury if the applicant does not have an indirect cost rate from its cognizant federal agency and wishes to include indirect costs in the proposed budget.*

h. Identify key personnel of the applicant organization for the proposed activity. Key personnel should include individuals who contribute to the programmatic development or execution of the project or program in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the grant. At a minimum, key personnel should include the applicable applicant organization personnel who are enrolled as the Authorizing Official(s), Program Director(s) / Principal Investigator(s), and Financial Officer(s) in GrantSolutions.gov. The Standard Terms and Conditions on Centers of Excellence grant awards require the applicant to notify Treasury if there are any changes in these key personnel. See Treasury's RESTORE Act website at https://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/home.aspx.

i. Provide other information requested in the RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Research Grant Program Application Narrative.

5. A letter from the applicant's highest official designating a senior authorized official who can legally bind the entity to execute the RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Applicant Certifications. A letter is not required if the applicant's highest official executes the certifications.
6. RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Applicant Certifications signed by the senior authorized official. *(Completion of the template in GrantSolutions.gov is required.)*
7. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable. See 31 C.F.R. Part 21 and the RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Applicant Certifications, Section E – Certification Regarding Lobbying. If applicable, the SF-LLL must be signed by the senior authorized official. Please note: If the senior authorized official is not submitting the application as the Authorizing Official in GrantSolutions.gov, then a signed SF-LLL should be uploaded as part of the application package; otherwise, the online SF-LLL will populate an electronic signature for whomever submits the application. *(Completion of the template is required, if applicable.)*
8. RESTORE Act Milestones Report. The applicant must provide the major milestones of the activity. Major milestones are discrete, high-level actions that, taken together, result in a completed eligible activity, e.g., awarding a contract, phases of planning. Columns G and H are for reporting post-award. *(Completion of the template in GrantSolutions.gov is required.)*
9. RESTORE Act Environmental Checklist. The applicant must identify the environmental laws that may apply to the eligible activity and the environmental documents that may be required. *(Completion of the template in GrantSolutions.gov is required.)*
10. RESTORE Act Status of Performance Report. The applicant must select appropriate performance measures that will be tracked throughout the period of performance. If the applicant is not able to select measures at the time of application, the selection of performance measures should be included as a task in the scope of work and as a major milestone on the RESTORE Act Milestones Report. *(Completion of the template in GrantSolutions.gov is required.)*

11. Current federally approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if indirect costs are included in the budget. *See 4 g, ix, Indirect Costs, in this section for additional information.*

More information on application policies and requirements is available at Treasury's RESTORE Act website at https://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/COE/Centers-of-Excellence.aspx.

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

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

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

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

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

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis as long as funds are available in an applicant's allocation. Applications should be submitted at least 90 days before the requested start date of the award. This funding opportunity announcement will close on June 5, 2017. A new funding opportunity announcement may be posted again in July 2017, as determined necessary by Treasury.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

1. Pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Treasury will not allow reimbursement of costs incurred before an award is made unless an applicant demonstrates that the costs were incurred directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the award, and that the costs were necessary for the efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the award, and only with Treasury's written approval. All costs incurred before the Federal awarding agency makes the Federal award are at the recipient's risk. Any pre-award costs should be requested as part of an application under this funding opportunity announcement. The applicant must clearly describe the proposed pre-award costs in the scope of work and budget justification, and provide a compelling justification as to why Treasury should approve them. Applicants considering including pre-award costs in an application should contact Treasury as soon as possible to discuss them.
2. Proposal costs of the current accounting period normally should be treated as indirect costs per 2 C.F.R. § 200.460. Applications including proposal costs as direct costs should provide a detailed justification as to the appropriateness of charging the proposal costs directly to the prospective award.
3. As noted in the Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for Centers of Excellence Research Grants on Treasury's website at https://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/home.aspx, the following costs are unallowable unless approved in writing by Treasury:

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

b. Acquisition of land or interests in land.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

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

B. Review and Selection Process

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

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

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

D. Review of Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System Information (FAPIIS) Data

Treasury, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS). See 41 U.S.C. § 2313.

Each applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. Treasury will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.205.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Treasury will notify applicants of application determinations via email, either directly from Treasury or via email notifications issued through the GrantSolutions.gov system. Treasury will provide successful applicants with a Notice of Award. Applicants must formally accept the award within 30 days, via the GrantSolutions.gov system, in order for the award to become legally binding. Awards must be accepted by the Authorizing Official enrolled in GrantSolutions.gov.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards under this announcement are subject to the RESTORE Act, Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 34, and federal laws and regulations concerning grants. The Standard and Program-specific Terms and Conditions for awards under this announcement are posted on Treasury's RESTORE Act website at https://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/home.aspx. Below is a list of requirements with which the applicant will need to comply. The list is not meant to be exclusive.

1. Lobbying Restrictions at 31 C.F.R. Part 21.
2. Government-wide Debarment and Suspension Requirements at 31 C.F.R. Part 19.

3. Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace at 31 C.F.R. Part 20.
4. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act and regulations at 2 C.F.R. Part 170.
5. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and any Treasury regulations implementing these requirements.
6. Award Term for Trafficking in Persons at 2 C.F.R. Part 175.
7. Treasury Title IX regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 28.

Special award conditions may be applied to an award under this announcement.

C. Reporting

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

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

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

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