2021 NOAA California Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: 2021 NOAA California Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2021-2006749

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates: The deadline for applications is 11:59 PM Eastern Time on February 16, 2021 when submitting through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). PLEASE NOTE: For applicants that submit through Grants.gov, it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. If use of Grants.gov is impractical for technical or other reasons, paper copy applications will be accepted only as described in Section IV.D. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. No email and/or facsimile applications will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: California B-WET funds locally relevant, authentic experiential learning for K-12 audiences through Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). MWEEs involve learning both outdoors and in the classroom as students engage in issue definition, outdoor field experiences, synthesis and conclusions, and action projects. The goal is to increase understanding and stewardship of the ocean, its local watersheds, and special areas like national marine sanctuaries. Projects advance the Next Generation Science Standards, the California Environmental Literacy Standards, and the Ocean and Climate Literacy Essential Principles.

This year, COVID-19 has significantly impacted the ability of environmental education providers to engage with schools and therefore meaningfully reach students and teachers. The loss of programs will have lasting repercussions on the targeted audiences of these programs and to the institutions who provide these services. The NOAA B-WET program recognizes that support is needed to bridge the gap that has been created by the loss of revenue, the cancellation of programs, and the inequities that are being exacerbated by the pandemic.

Given this, the CA B-WET funding announcement focuses on the following priority areas: 1) Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) Implementation in School Districts

(professional development for teachers and student experiences), 2) Teacher Professional Development for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs), 3) Meaningful Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and 4) Continuation Projects that Focus on Student MWEEs.

The terms used throughout each Section are defined as follows: a. Monterey Bay watershed—the counties of Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Monterey, San Benito, and San Luis Obispo; b. San Francisco Bay watershed—the counties of Marin, San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo, Contra Costa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity, Napa and Santa Rosa; c. Santa Barbara Channel watershed—the counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA B-WET National Program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. B-WET was established in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and currently exists in seven regions: California, Chesapeake Bay, Hawai`i, Gulf of Mexico, New England, Pacific Northwest, and Great Lakes. Four of the seven B-WET regions are coordinated by or in partnership with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahanaumokuakea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. For more information, visit our NOAA B-WET National Program website at: https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet.

The primary delivery of B-WET is through competitive funding that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). MWEEs are learner-centered experiences that focus on investigations into local environmental issues that lead to informed stewardship actions. They are composed of multiple elements that include learning both outdoors and in the classroom, and are designed to increase the environmental literacy of all student participants. All students, regardless of where they live or their social or economic status, should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from MWEEs.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND
All projects, regardless of the priority, must incorporate all elements of the MWEE in order to be successful. The definition of the MWEE that follows was created by the NOAA B-WET National Program and is used by all seven B-WET regions throughout the country.

1. MWEE Essential Elements
The MWEE consists of four essential elements and four supporting practices that build upon each other to create this comprehensive learning experience for students. This process should be tailored to each audience and be age appropriate with practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades, starting with teacher-guided investigations and progressing to student-led inquiry. Teachers should support and assist students in their inquiry and investigations of local environmental issues that are of interest to them throughout the MWEE. To support teacher implementation of MWEEs, B-WET has also

included practices that are recommended to be in place for teacher professional development activities.

NOAA adopted this definition of the MWEE to assist with the development of effective projects founded in best practices determined through environmental education evaluation and research. In order to completely understand the MWEE components so your application is successful, please refer to the following website: https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience

1.1 Issue definition
Teachers and students work together to define a locally relevant environmental issue or phenomenon affecting watershed, coastal, or ocean ecosystems. Throughout the MWEE, students focus on a driving question that guides their inquiry and investigations of the defined issue and leads to stewardship actions. During Issue Definition, students learn about the issue through classroom instruction and are actively involved in planning and conducting background research and investigations focused on understanding the driving question (e.g., making observations and/or measurements; carrying out investigations; talking to experts or relevant stakeholders; reviewing credible resources; reviewing current environmental policies or community practices; exploring models; using tools). Students also reflect on personal and public values and perspectives related to the driving question. Teachers should ensure that the driving question is open-ended, relevant to the students' lives, and meets their learning objectives.

1.2. Outdoor Field Experiences
Students participate in multiple outdoor field experiences sufficient to investigate the driving question. Within appropriate safety guidelines, students are actively involved in planning and conducting the field investigations, including developing supporting questions to explore the driving question in the field. During field experiences, students use their senses to make first-hand observations, gain experience using equipment or technology to collect data or measurements, and conduct experiments necessary to answer their supporting questions and inform student stewardship actions. Outdoor field experiences can take place on school grounds or at locations in close proximity to schools, such as streams or city parks. They can also take place at offsite locations such as state parks, wildlife refuges, or education centers that are staffed by experts and have access to field education materials and facilities. A range of individuals, including teachers, environmental educators, natural resource professionals, or trained volunteers, can help facilitate field experiences and ensure a safe outdoor learning environment. However, facilitators should co-develop and co-teach instruction with teachers so that field experiences are supportive of their learning objectives and/or academic

standards.

Outdoor field experiences allow students to interact with their local environment and contribute to learning in ways that traditional classroom or laboratory settings may not. Projects should employ methodologies used in fieldwork so students learn how to work in a natural uncontrolled environment. Students who have opportunities to learn in, thrive in, and appreciate the outdoors can become informed and engaged champions for our natural resources.

1.3 Synthesis and Conclusions
Students identify, synthesize, and apply evidence from their investigations to draw conclusions about the defined issue or phenomenon. They demonstrate understanding of their investigations and conclusions through communication to a variety of audiences such as other classrooms, schools, parents, or the community.

Synthesis and conclusions is an iterative process and should happen regularly throughout the MWEE. Throughout the process, teachers dedicate time for students to reflect on their experiences and investigations in relation to the defined issue or phenomenon. Teachers should facilitate students sharing their conclusions with each other. Students' conclusions should be used to help develop stewardship actions.

1.4 Stewardship Actions
Students identify and implement a stewardship action as a solution that directly addresses the defined issue or phenomenon within their school, town, neighborhood, or community. Students are actively engaged and, to the extent possible, drive the decision-making, planning, and implementation of the stewardship action while teachers play a facilitation role by forming groups, moderating, and answering questions. Students reflect on the action and determine the extent to which the action successfully addressed the issue or phenomenon.

This element allows students to understand that they personally have the power to bring about change to environmental issues, take action to address these issues at the personal or societal level, and understand the value of that action. This can instill confidence in students and can contribute to students becoming environmental stewards in their communities.

Stewardship actions can take many forms and may fall into the following categories:

• Watershed Restoration or Protection: actions that assist in the recovery or preservation of a watershed or related ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed (e.g., plant or restore protective vegetation/trees; restore a local habitat; remove invasive plants; clean up

litter at local beaches, parks, or school grounds; develop a school garden, natural history area, community garden, or other sustainable green space; install rain gardens to help manage stormwater).

• Everyday Choices: actions that reduce human impacts on watersheds and related ecosystems and offer ways to live more sustainably (e.g., reduce/reuse/recycle/upcycle; monitor and save water in the face of potential drought or reduction in water availability; compost food or yard waste; research and implement energy efficient strategies or energy alternatives at school and/or at home).

• Community Engagement: actions that inform others about how to address community-level environmental issues (e.g., give presentation to local organizations; organize community events; record or broadcast public service announcements; share information on social media; post flyers in community; share posters at community events/fairs/festivals; mentoring).

• Civic Action: actions that identify and address issues of public concern. Students acting alone or together to protect public values or make a change or difference in a student's school, town, neighborhood, or community (e.g., present to school board or school principal; attend, speak, or present at town meetings; write or meet with decision makers/elected officials of a students' school, town, neighborhood, or community).

2. MWEE Supporting Practices

The MWEE also includes four supporting practices that describe "what teachers do." B-WET recommends that these supporting practices be in place to ensure successful MWEE implementation with students. MWEEs depend on teachers facilitating and supporting student learning for the duration of the MWEE. Teachers help students make connections and draw on past lessons, serve as environmental role models, and ensure that the essential elements of the MWEE come together to support goals for learning. Even when environmental educators or other professionals are leading elements of the MWEE, the teacher should be actively engaged in answering questions and relating the experience back to the full arc of the MWEE.

To support this level of engagement, teachers should have access to professional development opportunities that support their content knowledge, understanding of the MWEE framework, and confidence and intention to implement MWEEs independently.

2.1 Classroom Integration

To be effective, MWEEs need to be embedded into what is already occurring in the

classroom. MWEEs should be anchored to state and national academic standards and support goals for learning and/or student achievement. They are not meant to be something extra, but rather an educational approach that helps teachers meet their learning objectives. They can provide authentic, engaging interdisciplinary learning that crosses traditional boundaries between disciplines. Out-of-school activities (e.g., after-school clubs and summer camps) may provide MWEEs, or complement and enrich traditional classroom-based MWEEs.

2.2 Local Context

MWEEs use the local environment and community as a context for learning. Situating the MWEE within local contexts promotes learning that is rooted in the unique culture, history, environment, economy, literature, and art of a students' school, neighborhood, town, or community. To enrich MWEEs, local resources (e.g., partners; expertise; field sites) should be incorporated. Partnerships, such as those with local community-based organizations, allow students to engage with members of their community of diverse cultures, values, and expertise for a more equitable and inclusive experience.

Emphasizing local contexts enables students and teachers to develop stronger connections and appreciation for their local environments and communities. This also enables students and teachers to explore how their individual and collective decisions affect their immediate surroundings and how their immediate surroundings affect larger ecosystems and watersheds.

2.3 Sustained Learning Experience

MWEEs have multiple experiences that engage students from beginning to end. While a lesson may focus more heavily on one essential element, it does not stand in isolation from the others. Each essential element builds upon and reinforces the others to provide rich learning opportunities spread over the course of a unit or multiple units. All students should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from each essential element.

3. Teacher MWEE Professional Development Practices

Professional development should empower teachers to confidently and competently use the MWEE approach to support standards-based learning that aligns with local education agency initiatives. In order to gain and maintain environmental education competencies, teachers benefit from sustained, high-quality professional development that includes ongoing support and feedback. Teachers should gain confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will be able to implement MWEEs after the professional development has ended. Specifically, the following practices are recommended for professional development to support teachers implementing MWEEs.

3.1 Increases Teachers' Knowledge and Awareness of Environmental Issues
Teachers must have an adequate level of content knowledge for their MWEE topic area specific to their grade level and discipline, including an understanding of their local watersheds, interactions between natural systems and social systems, and human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth systems. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions, teachers must also have a deep understanding of the facts related to environmental issues, along with an understanding of the various stakeholder values. In addition, teachers who demonstrate environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviors may be role models for their students and increase their ability to guide students in stewardship actions to address complex environmental issues.

3.2 Models MWEE Framework
Facilitators should utilize the same techniques and experiences in professional development that teachers are expected to use with their students, such as hands-on outdoor field experiences, critical thinking about environmental issues, and stewardship actions. Professional development should also provide opportunities for teachers to understand the goals and rationale behind the MWEE as an approach to learning and stewardship. Professional development should deliver workshops on both MWEE content and instruction, include ongoing support for teachers, and include time for teachers to plan for how the student MWEEs will be implemented.

3.3 Allows for Adequate Instructional Time
Professional development should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several weeks or months. Professional development should include ample opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and plan for how to use knowledge and skills gained from professional development in the classroom. Opportunities to share ideas and challenges with colleagues in a cohort creates space for dialogue that can provide teachers with additional support and inspiration.

3.4 Provides Ongoing Teacher Support and Appropriate Incentives
Even in cases where teachers participate in robust multi-day workshops, such as summer or weekend courses, it is still essential that professional development providers have a structure in place for on-going teacher support and enrichment. This can take the form of follow up meetings, creating web-based forums for communication and feedback, establishing mentor teachers who can serve as points of contact, or including teams of teachers from one particular school. Continuing education credits and stipends can be used to encourage participation in on-going professional development opportunities. Outreach and training opportunities for school administrators may help increase high level support for both environmental education and continuing teacher professional development for teachers.

3.5 Meets Jurisdictional Guidelines for Effective Teacher Professional Development
Each jurisdiction has established guidance and recommendations relevant to all forms of teacher professional development. When possible, professional development opportunities for MWEEs should adhere to these general guidelines set forth by local education agencies.

4. Resources for Implementing MWEEs
The following resources explain the MWEE and provide guidance on implementing a MWEE. Though some of the following resources are Chesapeake Bay-focused, the information provided is highly applicable to MWEEs implemented in California.

4.1 MWEE descriptive webpages: https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience. The full definition of the MWEE is provided online in an easy to use online format.

4.2 Bay Backpack MWEE webpages: http://baybackpack.com/mwee/what-is-a-mwee. Bay Backpack is an online resource that supports hands-on environmental learning. By providing educators with information about field studies, and curriculum guides and lesson plans, Bay Backpack helps educators find the tools they need to give their students MWEEs.

4.3 An Educator's Guide to the MWEE:
http://baybackpack.com/assets/documents/Educators_Guide_to_MWEE_Download.pdf. This guide provides basic tools to help think, plan, and evaluate a MWEE. It has been designed for users with varying levels of familiarity with the MWEE. It defines and explains the MWEE, guides you through creating a solid plan that connects a MWEE to the curriculum, helps you identify opportunities to build on existing MWEEs and assess success, and provides guidance on communicating MWEE successes and securing funding.

4.4 MWEE 101 Training: https://cbexapp.noaa.gov/course/view.php?id=5555. This is an online course for the MWEE and is made up of three lessons: Why MWEEs, What Makes a MWEE, and Planning and Evaluating MWEEs. These lessons will introduce you to the MWEE, explore what MWEEs can look like, highlight the MWEE's components, and introduce the tools that support the development and implementation of MWEEs.

4.5 School Grounds for Learning: http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/about. This resource supports the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects on school grounds.

5. Additional Required Components

5.1 Includes NOAA assets, including personnel and resources
NOAA has a wealth of applicable products and services, as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can heighten the impact of environmental instruction both in the classroom and in the field. Additionally, environmental professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and stewardship. For more on NOAA assets for education please see:

- https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/data
- https://www.noaa.gov/education
- https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/
- https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/education/
- https://www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/NIYSCA.pdf

5.2 Educating Every Student In, About, and For the Environment
Unfortunately, many K-12 students do not currently have consistent access to adequately funded high-quality environmental experiences. The California B-WET Program is strongly committed to expanding the participation of marginalized communities. Youth in marginalized communities have traditionally not seen their identities reflected in outdoor spaces and the environment as a whole. In addition, a focus on cultural relevance is expected both for the target audience and the organization structure. Cultural relevance is defined as the ability to effectively reach and engage communities and their youth in a manner consistent with the cultural context and values of that community while effectively addressing disparities of diversity, equity, and inclusion within an organization's entire structure. The California B-WET Program anticipates that a substantial portion of the target audience served by funded projects will represent diverse communities, especially those who have had historical and systemic barriers to accessing the outdoors. Please include information about the target audiences reached and the web page(s) that used to gather that information.

5.3 Projects make a Connection to the Sanctuary and the Ocean Environment
Projects must include information about the National Marine Sanctuary System and the ocean environment throughout the duration of the project—before, during, and after the MWEE activities. Information provided may highlight one or more of the national marine sanctuaries located on the West Coast and must demonstrate a connection to the ocean environment through the watershed system. The idea is that students understand how their actions can affect the coastal/ocean environment through the watershed system. They also need to understand what a national marine sanctuary is, why it is important, the resources found within the sanctuary, and where it is located. Examples of curriculum and lesson plans that can be used to highlight this information can be found at:

https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers.

5.4 Climate Change Education

Earth's climate is changing. When humans burn fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas for energy, we put rampant amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This carbon dioxide acts like a heat-trapping blanket and warms the planet. The carbon dioxide also enters the ocean, causing the pH to drop and leading to ocean acidification, which makes it difficult for animals to build and maintain their shells and skeletons and has enormous health implications for life in the ocean. The overwhelming majority of climate scientists agree that humans have had a profound influence on our changing climate. Climate change will bring economic and environmental challenges as well as opportunities, and citizens who have an understanding of climate science will be better prepared to respond to both. Our quality of life and, ultimately, our survival are dependent on our “climate literacy”—our ability to understand and predict a warming planet.

Projects should incorporate on one or more of the following areas of climate change as is relates to the watershed and MWEEs:

> Ocean Acidification
> Energy Reduction
> Consumer Choices
> Ecosystem Resiliency

And should integrate the following key themes and messages:

a. Changes in climate will impact national marine sanctuaries and the overall health of the ocean that is vital to our quality of life and, ultimately, our survival.

b. One or more of the following key messages:

1) Human activities are changing the Earth’s climate.
2) Climate change affects national marine sanctuaries and the underwater treasures they protect.
3) The choices you make today do make a difference.
4) Collectively we need to adapt our carbon footprint and lower our carbon emissions.
5) Collective actions are needed to preserve as much biodiversity in the ocean as possible.

B. Program Priorities

B-WET projects under this funding announcement support the direct implementation of the MWEE. All proposals should follow the MWEE definition and all additional required components to be successful. In addition to the components listed below.

This year applicants may be struggling to deal with uncertainty related to COVID-19 on

programming. Applicants should describe how their methods and programming will be adapted to address all MWEE elements, to the degree possible, while being responsive to guidelines and restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic. Proposals may detail a range of approaches to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty impacting schools throughout the watershed. It is understood that adjustments and alternate approaches will likely be different from the traditional MWEE approach of past projects.

Specifically, applicants should:

> Know audience limitations: Because pandemic restrictions and limitations vary by jurisdiction, school, and household, applicants should demonstrate awareness of their target audiences' capabilities (such as access to the technology needed to participate in virtual programming). Applicants should describe planned communication with school partner administrative staff about how best to engage their audiences.

> Describe alternate methods: Applicants should provide options and examples of how the MWEE framework can be addressed through alternative approaches and methods, such as virtual, blended, or at-home, or in-person learning, and remote stewardship activities.

> Describe project flexibilities: Because pandemic responses are fluid over time, applicants should describe what flexibilities their project plan possesses and their ability to adjust methods mid-stream, if needed, and still carry on their project plan. Applicants may describe more than one scenario in their proposal, however the objectives of the scenarios should aim for a common outcome.

PRIORITY 1: MWEE Implementation in School Districts (professional development for teachers and student experiences)
CA B-WET is putting a priority on the development and implementation of systemic MWEEs in school districts. This year's funding announcement is focused on reaching school districts that will provide MWEEs, over a period of time, for whole school districts. These can be through grants directly to school districts or through grants awarded to non-profit organizations, state agencies, universities, or other partners to work with school districts on their systemic programs. Placed-based MWEEs can provide excellent opportunities to teach the Next Generation Science Standards and California Environmental Literacy Standards (Senate Bill No. 720).

Systemic MWEE projects reach the entire student population in one or more grades with teacher-supported MWEEs. The systematic implementation should ensure that the teachers of these students receive high quality professional development to give them the content

knowledge and pedagogical skills for outdoor learning to support all aspects of the MWEE. Projects that are systemic encourage ownership from a broad range of constituents and promote long-term sustainability of the MWEE project in a school district. These programs require leadership and support from the school district, however, because of the broad reach of systemic projects, partnerships with multiple partners are often needed to ensure all students receive all components of a MWEE and meaningful professional development for teachers is provided.

Applicants must demonstrate how trained teachers will implement student MWEEs, and what resources (funds, staff, facilities, partner organizations, etc.) exist to support student components of the MWEE. Successful applicants under this priority will be asked to document the number of students receiving MWEEs as a direct result of the project. Proposals should include details about where the project fits in the scope and sequence of school district curriculum, and applicants should clearly understand and convey the primary learning objectives. Multi-disciplinary objectives are encouraged.

PRIORITY 2: Teacher Professional Development for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs)
Teachers should be skilled in using environmental education and MWEEs to address multiple subjects' curriculum standards and local education agency initiatives. In order to gain and maintain environmental education competencies, teachers need access to sustained, high-quality professional development that includes ongoing support and feedback. Teachers should gain confidence in the value of implementing MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will conduct MWEES after the B-WET supported program has ended.

PRIORITY 3: Meaningful Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
The NOAA B-WET Program recognizes that the environmental education field faces multiple threats due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent survey of impacts on the field found that thirty percent of environmental education providers report they will be definitely unable or very unlikely to reopen (Collins et. al 2020). Organizations will need funding to support creative and alternative approaches so they can provide online or physically distant meaningful opportunities, especially in marginalized communities. In addition, the financial challenges many organizations are facing through the pandemic raises the risk that in the recovery they will prioritize majority audiences and paying participants, with the potential to set back years of efforts to engage more historically underfunded communities in these programs. In response to these impacts, the NOAA B-WET Program will focus on capacity building to ensure providers can adjust and adapt to this changing environment. Capacity building can be defined as building capacity within the school system to implement meaningful watershed educational experiences, or building capacity within the organization

that is providing the meaningful watershed educational experience. Our intent through this priority is to allow the community to respond with their needs.

Some examples of capacity building could include:

> Innovative approaches to MWEEs during the COVID-19 pandemic;
> Support for environmental educators to be redeployed into schools and school systems to provide assistance to instruction in an outdoor setting;
> Support to promote the value of environmental education as engaging, effective, and essential during the COVID-19 pandemic;
> Support for an Outdoor Access Coordinator who assists schools and school systems to navigate the pathway towards outdoor learning and field trips during the COVID-19 pandemic, under existing, or new, restrictions that apply to these opportunities;
> Development of schoolyard habitats, gardens, restoration areas, outdoor labs, weather stations, and other outdoor settings that are functional for teachers and engaging for students;
> Training for environmental education staff to engage with marginalized communities;
> Support to acquire technology and professional training that will enable environmental education organizations to reimagine their programming so they can provide both high-quality and meaningful online and/ or physically distant learning opportunities, especially in marginalized communities;
> Development of partnerships that are a significant driver in ensuring equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities or may bridge pathways between in-school MWEE implementation and complementary out-of-school activities.

We strongly encourage applicants to partner with community-based organizations that will lead with equity during recovery. Community-based partnerships is clearly defined in Section B.1.b (3), but may include:

> Organizations and institutions that are run by and/or serve marginalized groups, particularly minority and people of color communities;
> Partnerships that help to address a watershed issue or phenomenon by bringing in local expertise on existing environmental issues and creating innovative solutions;
> Partnerships that enhance the local context, cultural relevance, and cultural competence in professional development for all teachers.

As noted, our intent through this priority is to allow the community to respond with their needs. Therefore, applicants should include a clear description of need within their target audience, and a justification for adjustments that will lead to successful meaningful experiences during COVID-19. Applicants are encouraged to describe the demographics and

needs of their target audience(s) and use data to support these assertions. The target audience should be included in the planning process for implementing adjustments. The targeted community's need and participation should be verified with letters of support from both the applicant's community-based partner organizations, and the targeted schools, school district, or school systems.

Priority 4: Continuation Projects that Focus on Student MWEEs
The CA B-WET Program recognizes that many current B-WET award projects are focused on MWEEs for students. Therefore, if you are currently a CA B-WET award recipient and would like to continue your project focused on student experiences, you may reapply as long as you can demonstrate how you will deal with uncertainty related to COVID-19 on student programming and how the methods and implementation will be adapted to address all MWEE elements. You may only apply under this priority area if you are currently a B-WET award recipient.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 USC 893 a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science, and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that approximately $1,000,000 may be available in FY 2021 in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds. About $425,000 will be made available to the San Francisco Bay area, about $350,000 will be made available to the Monterey Bay area, and about $225,000 will be made available to the Santa Barbara and Ventura areas. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries anticipates that approximately 6-10 grants will be awarded with these funds.

If you are applying for Priority 1, you may apply up to $100,000.
If you are applying for Priorities 2, 3, or 4 you may apply up to $75,000.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified

projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the California B-WET competitive process are anticipated, but will depend on funding levels and resources available to support new projects.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2021.

If you are applying for Priority 1, you may apply up to three (3) years. These are called multi-year grants. Applications should cover a project period of between one and three years. Projects that request multi-year funding must include in their submission a full description of the activities and estimated budget by line item (e.g. personnel, equipment, supplies) for all proposed work for each year.

When a multi-year project is awarded, the scope of work and budget for all years is approved at the time of the award, but funding is usually provided only for the first year of the project with the remainder of the award subject to incremental funding, usually annually. NOAA anticipates continuing these multi-year awards for the entirety of their project periods. However, the agency has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with the award beyond the initial funding increment. Continuation of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance beyond the initial funding increment is at the sole discretion of NOAA and will be contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the NOAA mission and priorities, and the availability of funds.

Recipients of incrementally-funded projects will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years, and current recipients seeking continued funding of these multi-year awards issued under the incremental funding policy do not need to apply to this funding announcement.

If you are applying for Priority 2, 3, or 4 applicants may apply for funding in 12 month increments for a maximum of three consecutive years. Each funding request should not

exceed more than 12 months and a new competitive application must be submitted each year in response to the program's annual funding announcement. Proposal projects do not need to change significantly in scope from year to year, but should demonstrate growth in subsequent project years (i.e. in project years 2 and 3). Projects should demonstrate they are being evaluated and changing as a result of the assessment. Renewal of an application will depend on submission of a successful proposal subject to panel reviews, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding to continue the award.

If a recipient would like to apply for additional years of funding, beyond the three (3) consecutive years (both for multi-year and renewal projects), they will be determined to be new awards. No assurance for funding renewal proposals or funding for projects beyond the initial three consecutive years exists; funding will be at the complete discretion of NOAA.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Whether the funding instrument is a grant or a cooperative agreement will be determined by the amount of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' involvement in the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if National Marine Sanctuary System staff share responsibility for management, control, direction, or performance of the project with the recipient. Specific terms regarding substantial involvement will be contained in special award conditions.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, community-based and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments. For profit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are not eligible to apply.

However, for-profit and foreign organizations and foreign public entities may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner. Likewise, Federal agencies are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this announcement, but may be project partners. Applicants must be located within the U.S. and can be physically located in any state, but must work within the geographic boundaries of the Monterey Bay, San Francisco Bay or Santa Barbara Channel watersheds. Projects whose sole audience is outside the watersheds outlined above are not eligible.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing is not required under this program. Any voluntary cost sharing or matching does not impact scoring and must be consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §200.306.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

1. Electronic submission

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through https://www.grants.gov/. You may access the electronic grant application for the California Bay Watershed Education and Training Program at https://www.grants.gov/.

Please note that applicants must locate the downloadable application package for this program by the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) number (found on the first page of the NOFO) or CFDA number (11.429). Users of Grants.gov are now required to use a new application process called Workspace. For more information regarding this platform, please visit: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date.

Information on the CA B-WET program, including examples of currently supported projects, can be found at https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html.

2. Hard copy submission

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that make submission impractical, hard copy applications will be accepted. A signed original may be submitted to Attn: Seaberry Nachbar, B-WET Coordinator, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Office, 99 Pacific Street, Building 455A, Monterey, CA 93940. The closing deadline for applying through Grants.gov is the same as for the paper submission noted in this announcement.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements.

The required Federal forms are as follows:

Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance
Standard Form 424A: Budget Information, Non-construction Programs
Standard Form 424B: Assurances, Non-Construction Programs
Form CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying
Standard Form LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

1. Proposals
Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

This year applicants may be struggling to deal with uncertainty related to COVID-19 on programming. Applicants should describe how their methods and programming will be adapted to address all MWEE elements, to the degree possible, while being responsive to guidelines and restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic. Proposals may detail a range of approaches to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty impacting schools throughout the watershed. It is understood that adjustments and alternate approaches will likely be different from the traditional MWEE approach of past projects.

Specifically, applicants should:

> Know audience limitations: Because pandemic restrictions and limitations vary by jurisdiction, school, and household, applicants should demonstrate awareness of their target audiences' capabilities (such as access to the technology needed to participate in virtual programming). Applicants should describe planned communication with school partner administrative staff about how best to engage their audiences.

> Describe alternate methods: Applicants should provide options and examples of how the MWEE framework can be addressed through alternative approaches and methods, such as virtual, blended, or at-home, or in-person learning, and remote stewardship activities.

> Describe project flexibilities: Because pandemic responses are fluid over time, applicants should describe what flexibilities their project plan possesses and their ability to adjust methods mid-stream, if needed, and still carry on their project plan. Applicants may describe more than one scenario in their proposal, however the objectives of the scenarios should aim for a common outcome.

a. Proposal Requirements: Required elements for all submissions

(1) Components of the proposal outlined in Section IV. B. 2b. (1-8) should be submitted as a

single PDF document and uploaded into the Grants.gov system as a single PDF document. The order of the documents should reflect the order outlined below (Project summary, Project description (items 2- 6), budget narrative, budget table, letters of support, CVs, logic model, and all other supporting documents).

(2) Proposal format must be in a 12-point font and single-spaced. The entire project description (items 2- 6), should not exceed 15 pages. The budget narrative, budget table, Federal forms, indirect cost rate and the project summary are not included in this 15-page limit.

(3) Appendices and supporting documentation may be included, but may not exceed a total of 15-pages. Appendices may include information such as curriculum, resumes, and/or letters of endorsement. Additional informational material will be disregarded.

b. Proposal Format:
Proposals should include the following information and it is recommended that they follow the format outlined below:

(1) Project Summary (1-page):
- Organization title
- Principal Investigator(s) (PI)
- Address, telephone number, and email address of applicant and PI
- Partner(s)
- Priority Area
- Project title
- Project duration
- Summary of work to be performed (include number of teachers and/or students that will be involved in your project and total project cost per student/teacher)
- Total Federal funds requested
- Cost-sharing to be provided from non-Federal sources, if any (specify whether contributions are project-related cash or in-kind)
- Total project cost

(2) Project Description (15-pages)
- Accomplishments to date (this applies only to those applicants that have received a B-WET grant in prior years):

List your objectives from previous years and provide accomplishments to date for each of the objectives. Provide as much detail as possible to demonstrate to reviewers that the

project goals and objectives of your grant have been/are being met. Please include your evaluation results from your evaluation report, including the tools and methods that you used. Specifically include your evaluation summary.

This is intended to provide to the reviewers a clear outline of the work you have accomplished in prior years and to outline what work is needed to be accomplished with additional funds. More importantly, this is your opportunity to describe to the reviewers your successes, lessons learned, and any assessment or evaluation results you have completed. When the reviewers are reading this proposal they will want to know why funding should be continued, so use this section to demonstrate your growth.

- Need: Provide a statement that describes the need for this type of project. Why are you proposing this project? Cite studies or sources, where appropriate, that validate the need for your project. It should be made clear in this section that your organization's proposed project is not duplicating other efforts in your region. Include information about how the project responds meaningfully to the COVID-19 pandemic. Define the pandemic-induced challenge to the environmental education field that the proposed project will address. Define the targeted community's needs and limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Target audience: Identify the target audience and demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience. Identify specifically how many students and/or teachers are involved in your project and their demographics. Identify if you are working with a historically marginalized group, students of color, students from low-income families or those likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please provide data to justify and support the need of this targeted community.

- Participant recruitment: Provide a plan of action that outlines how you will recruit your target audience and identify incentives to be used such as teacher stipends or continuing education credits.

- Objectives: Explain your objectives and how you are going to accomplish these objectives. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible, Please reference the CA B-WET website: https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/, when developing your objectives. Clearly explain how you will achieve your expected outputs and outcomes.

- What: Provide a statement of your project that includes a clear statement of the work to be undertaken. Demonstrate how your project meets the criteria defined in the Program Priorities. This section should illustrate how the proposed project will meet the full definition

of the MWEE(s), including integration into the school curriculum (supporting NGSS and Environmental Literacy), using issue investigation, and conducting a stewardship action project. Please include a table that outlines how you are meeting NGSS. For an example of a table please reference the CA B-WET website: https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html.

For Priority 3, project descriptions should describe the capacity building needed to assist education providers in adjusting and adapting to COVID-19. Describe the proposed creative or alternative approach (capacity building) to address the challenge (e.g. capacity building within the school system or within an EE provider organization). Articulate specific methods for capacity building and define how these will ensure EE providers and/or teachers can implement successful meaningful watershed educational experiences while adapting to the changing and challenging environment under COVID-19. Provide information about how the project responds meaningfully to the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges and how you will address these challenges. Please include how you will document and share your best practices and lessons learned to others in the community.

- Where: Give a precise location of the project and the area(s) that will be served.

(3) Who: Organization leads and partners.

- Organization leads: Explain who from your organization will conduct the project. Include key individuals who will work on the project and a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. A CV for each individual that is participating significantly in the project is required. These can be embedded within the project description or as a part of the supporting documents. Please demonstrate to the reviewers that the staff employed is representative of the target audience needs. For example if you are working with a Latino audience, you have/will be employing a bi-lingual staff member.

- Partners/collaborators: List each partner organization, collaborator, or other key individuals who will work on the project. A partner is defined as an organization that contributes funding and/or in-kind resources and actively collaborates in the planning, promotion, execution, evaluation and interpretation of the program. Essentially the program would not be able to take place without the partner. A collaboration involves cooperation in which parties are not necessarily bound contractually. There is a relationship, but it is usually less formal. The most important thing to remember is: organizations don't collaborate – people collaborate (representing their organization). A letter of support from each partner/collaborator must be included in the supporting documents.

Community-Based Partnerships that Lead with Equity
In order to be effective, sustainable, and equitable, environmental education must be integrated within organizations that understand and support the needs of their community. In addition, this current crisis will be felt disproportionately by historically marginalized groups, particularly students of color and students from low-income families, that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts. Therefore, the NOAA B-WET Program is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that are run by and/or serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities. Projects are strongly encouraged to develop meaningful and mutually-beneficial partnerships that honor the strengths of community organizations. In successful partnerships, organizations have shared goals and work together to share resources, communicate effectively, collaborate on decision-making, and competently engage members of diverse cultures and expertise (Israel et al. 2005). Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project.

Applicants are encouraged to apply NAAEE's Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence (https://naaee.org/eepro/publication/community-engagement-guidelines) (NAAEE 2017) in developing their project plans for engagement of target audiences.

Community partnerships may look different across proposals but may include:

> Organizations and institutions that are run by and/or serve marginalized groups, particularly minority, black, indigenous, and people of color communities.
> Partnerships that help to address a watershed challenge, problem, or phenomenon by bringing in local expertise on existing environmental issues and creating innovative solutions.
> Partnerships that enhance the local context, cultural relevance, and cultural competence in professional development for all teachers.

(4) Project Timeline: Provide a project timeline in a table format that outlines the project from beginning to end. Include a project schedule that indicates when each action, event, milestone, product development, and evaluation will occur. This should include exact activities of the field trips and the classroom instruction, with the total amount of contact time. Applicants should clearly show total anticipated contact time with project participants (teachers in professional development and students), and indicate how much of this time will be spent outdoors. This information will be evaluated as part of the review criteria, so it is necessary to include this information in your project narrative.

(5) Project Evaluation: Evaluation here is defined as the systematic collection and documentation of information about your project's outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, guide judgments about its impact, and/or inform decisions about future programming or funding. Up to 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal.

For this section, please include a logic model. An excellent example of a logic model can be found on the CA B-WET website: https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/archive/education/evaluation/logic.pdf.

In your evaluation plan, please describe how you will measure and document the outcomes and impacts of your project on your audience(s). How will your audience(s) be different after their involvement in your project and how will you measure those differences? The outcomes you measure should correlate to your goals and objectives and the CA B-WET Program's definition of MWEE's. Indicators of outcomes may be audience satisfaction with the project experience and changes in their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors. Indicators of outcomes do not include the number of people served or the activities you and your audience(s) engage in. Please include in your supporting documents any evaluation tools that you will be using as a part of your evaluation.

Also explain how you will document your evaluation results. For detailed information on how to create an evaluation plan or an evaluation report, please use the CA B-WET website at https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html.

Participation in B-WET National Evaluation:
In addition to project evaluation, grantees will be asked to participate in data collection for the national B-WET evaluation. The B-WET national evaluation consists of two parts; part 1 is for all recipients of B-WET grants while part 2 is only for programs that work with teachers. The B-WET national evaluation is intended to monitor program implementation and outcomes on an ongoing basis. Results of this evaluation will be used to improve the B-WET program, document its value, and better tailor it to program audiences. Grantees with teacher participants will be able to view a summary of responses from their participating teachers. Success of this effort depends on grantee participation, so applicants are strongly encouraged to review the information about the national evaluation system (available here: https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation) and consider how they can support it as part of their projects.

Part 1 (for all B-WET grantees): As part of this evaluation system, one individual from each recipient organization will be asked to voluntarily complete an online questionnaire once per

year of the award. The questionnaire should be able to be completed within 30-60 minutes (depending on the nature of the program) and may require some internal data compilation.

Part 2 (for programs with teacher professional development): For projects that work with teachers, the teacher-participants will be asked to complete one questionnaire at the close of their professional development and one after implementing Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences with their students (at the end of the following school year). Each teacher questionnaire should be able to be completed within 30 minutes. Along with completing the recipient questionnaire, grantees will be asked to provide the email addresses of participating teachers (after notifying teachers that their email will be shared) and to encourage teachers to participate in the national evaluation.

B-WET grantees and teachers who respond to the questionnaires will remain anonymous to B-WET and NOAA. NOAA will only view the resulting data in aggregate at the national or regional level, however grantees will receive a password-protected report link to allow them to view data from teacher participants of their project in aggregate.

All applicants should provide information about how they plan to support this national evaluation system, incorporate it into the project timeline, and ensure responses from participating teachers as part of their application. Applicants may incorporate staff time required to complete the B-WET national evaluation in their budget proposal. More information, including all of the survey instruments, is available on the NOAA B-WET national website here: https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation. Grantees should review the information available and take this into consideration in the planning for their project evaluations. For example:

- Grantees may not need to include questions that will be answered through the teacher instrument in their own evaluations.
- Wherever possible grantees should try to incorporate participation in the evaluation system into existing requirements for professional development program completion. For example, on completion of the teacher professional development survey, teachers will receive some program incentive.

Note that this evaluation system is not intended to replace project level evaluation. While grantees will have access to their teacher’s results from the evaluation system, the national evaluation may not provide the level of detail needed to fully understand, describe, and improve specific grant projects. Grantees are therefore encouraged to balance these needs within the 10% of their budget that is recommended for evaluation.

Additional information about this project, including background, FAQs, survey instruments, and suggested text for communicating with your teacher participants about this project, is available here: https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation.
This data collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with Office of Management and Budget guidelines (OMB Control No 0648-0658).

- Benefits or results expected: Identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities. Include any evaluation data and results that your organization may have conducted. For an example of an outputs table, please reference the CA B-WET website: https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html.

(6) Outreach and Education: Explain how your project will work with the target audience to educate and inform others of the results of your project, and any products, outcomes, or benefits of your project. As a part of the MWEE, applicants are required to share the project with the larger community. This section should outline mechanisms for significant external sharing and communication about the project by students, teachers, or project staff. Examples include community events (events that engage parents or other community members), peer to peer sharing for teacher and/or student (e.g., in-service days, school assemblies), conferences and to the media or social media. In addition, students may present to the Sanctuary Advisory Councils that are located in their region.

(7) Budget Narrative: The budget narrative should be composed of two parts, a budget table and a budget description. The budget narrative should include the total project costs that are required to accomplish what is proposed in the project description and includes contributions and donations. The budget narrative should provide the information needed to determine how the numbers outlined in the budget table and budget information form (SF- 424A) were derived. The narrative should explain the specific budget categories that are outlined in the SF-424A form, such as personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs. The budget narrative submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on all required Federal forms (SF-424, SF- 424A). Additional cost detail may be required prior to a final analysis of overall cost allowability, allocability, and reasonableness. See 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles” for additional information. Please note the following:

- If applying for multiple years of funding, the budget should be broken down for each year requested. For multi-year projects: Ensure that there is a detailed budget narrative detailing the budget requested for each year matching each Form SF-424A.
- Need for government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for assistance. Explain

why other funding sources cannot fund all the proposed work.
- Sustainability: The CA B-WET Program should not be considered a long-term source of funding. Therefore it is crucial that you explain how you will ensure that ongoing programs, once initiated, will be sustained. If you have received multiple years of funding you must include how your project will be sustainable beyond B-WET funding and how you plan to continue meeting your goals and objectives.
- 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.
- For any equipment, defined in 2 CFR §200.33 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," a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. For more information on equipment, see 2 CFR §200.313 and §§ 200.317-.326.
- Non-profit and university 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. Property disposition must be consistent with the requirements under 2 CFR §200.313(e).
- Applicants must include the budgets and budget justifications of subawards and price or cost information supporting contracts. Information must include, to the extent known, the name of the entity receiving funds, the location of the entity receiving the funds (e.g., city, state, and Congressional district), the location of the entity receiving funds (city, state, and Congressional district), and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract/subaward. All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR§§200.330-200.332 for subawards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements.
- Grant recipients may be encouraged to attend a state or regional B-WET meeting once during the duration of their grant. This will be an opportunity for former and current B-WET grant recipients to present their B-WET projects and learn from each other. This meeting may be part of an existing state conference or environmental education conference to minimize travel expenses. Budgets should include, in the travel category, estimated funds for this meeting (such as meals, lodging, and transportation, including rental car, shuttle, or taxi). No more than $1,000 should be budgeted for this expense.

Please refer to the budget NOAA Budget Narrative Guidance found on NOAA's Grants

Office webpage https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants for assistance.

- If indirect costs are requested, indirect-cost-rate agreements must be included for the applicant organization and the negotiated rate must be requested. If an applicant does not have an indirect cost rate and wants to include indirect costs, the applicant has up to 90 days after the award start date to submit an indirect cost proposal or cost allocation plan. Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees, however, indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee. Under 2 C.F.R. §200.414 “Indirect (F&A) Costs,” any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 C.F.R.§ 200.403 “Factors affecting allowability of costs.” If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06.

The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

(8) Supporting Documentation: Provide any required documents, which include:

- Letters of support: If the applicant organization has partners, such as schools, state agencies, or other organizations, letters of commitment should be included from partners/collaborator explaining their role in and/or funding of the proposed project. If no letters are included, it will be assumed the applicant has no partners/collaborators. Letters of recommendation may also be included to demonstrate previous work.
- Curriculum vitae.
- Evaluation tools.

The amount of information given in this section will depend on the type of project, but should be no more than 15 pages (this does not include the budget narrative, budget table, Federal forms, indirect cost rate, and the project summary).

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency

Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in Office of Management and Budget guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ce6ad5b9f5ee286d88a39101d9449fbd&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on February 16, 2021 when submitting through https://www.grants.gov. Proposals being submitted in hard copy must be postmarked or provided to a delivery service on or before February 16, 2021. Electronic proposals received in Grants.gov after this due date and time, will not be considered for funding.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

F. Funding Restrictions

1. The CA B-WET Program should not be considered a long-term source of funds.

2. Funding may not be used to support endowments; individuals; building campaigns or capital construction; deficit financing; annual giving; or fund-raising.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through https://www.grants.gov. In developing your submission timeline, note that validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two (2) business days after submission. In addition, potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted, and first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks or more. It is therefore strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their registration may need to be renewed prior to submitting to Grants.gov. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days or

longer to establish.

To use Grants.gov, an applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number 25 System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/index.jsf, and periodic renewals are required. Allow a minimum of five (5) 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. See also https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html.

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 listed in the Executive Summary of this Announcement. 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. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review, and the validation time is deemed the time NOAA received it.

If you experience a Grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before an applicable funding cycle deadline, please (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov.

Please note: problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered "systems issues." Similarly, an applicant's failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered Authorized Organizational Representative submits the application, or (iii) receive an email message from Grants.gov validating or

rejecting its application are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov “systems issue” is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of confirmed “systems issue,” or a significant natural disaster affecting submission, NOAA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov at the time of application submission that are beyond the control of the applicant.

Please visit the National Marine Sanctuaries CA B-WET website at: https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html or contact Seaberry Nachbar, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary office; 99 Pacific Street, Bldg. 455A, Monterey, CA 93940, or by phone at (831) 647-4204.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

For reviewers to determine how well your project fits within the guidelines of the CA B-WET program, it is very important to address all of these evaluation criteria below.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (35 points)
This criterion ascertains whether the proposed work addresses B-WET program priorities and if the project is relevant to NOAA.

For all Priorities
- Issue definition and background research - Will the students/teachers focus on an environmental question, problem, or issue requiring background research and investigation? Do they learn about the issue through classroom instruction, the collection of data, conducting experiments, talking to experts and reviewing credible publications? Is the issue age appropriate with practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades, starting with educator guided investigation and progressing to student-led inquiry?
- Outdoor field activities - Do students/teachers participate in multiple (more than two) outdoor field activities sufficient to collect the data or make observations required for answering the research questions and informing student actions? Are the students/teachers actively involved?
- Stewardship action projects - Do students/teachers participate in a grade-level appropriate project during which they take action to address environmental issues at the personal or societal level. Does the stewardship action project result in a positive impact on the

environment?
- Synthesis and conclusions - Do students/teachers analyze and evaluate the results of projects and investigations? Do students/teachers synthesize and communicate results and conclusions to an external audience such as their peers, schools, parents, the community, or at conferences?
- NOAA assets - Does the applicant incorporate NOAA assets into the program that will heighten the impact of environmental instruction in both the classroom and field?

For all Priorities - Provide information about how the project responds meaningfully to the COVID-19 pandemic. Does the applicant clearly define the COVID-19 pandemic-induced challenge to the environmental education field that the proposed project will address? Does the applicant define the targeted community's needs and limitations?

Priority 1 - MWEE Implementation in School Districts
Does the project have a plan to reach all students and relevant teachers at a school district? Does the proposal ensure that the teachers of these students receive high-quality professional development to give them the content knowledge and pedagogical skills for outdoor learning to support all aspects of the MWEE? Do the applicants demonstrate how trained teachers will implement student MWEEs? Does the applicant clearly document that the proposed project is a part of building or supporting a broader systemic program in a school district?

Priority 2 - Teacher MWEE
Does the proposal clearly document how it will ultimately result in student MWEEs? Does the project increase teacher knowledge and awareness of environmental issues? Does the project allow for adequate instructional time? Does the project provide ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives? Does the project include hours of professional development time? Are many of the hours of professional development time spent outdoors?

Priority 3 - Response to COVID-19
Does the applicant describe the proposed creative or alternative approach (capacity building) to address the challenge (e.g. capacity building within the school system or within an EE provider organization)? Does the applicant articulate their specific methods for capacity building and do they define how these will ensure EE providers and/or teachers can implement successful MWEEs while adapting to the changing and challenging environment under COVID-19? Does the applicant include members of the targeted audience in the planning and implementation processes proposed? Does the applicant incorporate best practices from existing publications into their approach to engaging with schools during the pandemic, equitably reopening schools during and after the pandemic, and/or addressing the use of outdoor spaces for education? Does the applicant include plans for sharing best

practices and lessons learned during the pandemic from this project?

2. Technical Merit (35 points)
This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

For all Priority Areas:
- Does the applicant target the priority audience outlined in the funding announcement and provide specific demographics? Does the applicant define the audience(s) that will be reached? Are the targeted communities historically marginalized groups, students of color, students from low-income families, or those that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts? Does the applicant include data to justify and support their description of the targeted communities?
- Does the applicant make a clear connection to the marine/estuarine environment and a national marine sanctuary and/or the National Marine Sanctuary System?
- Does the applicant explain the concept of a watershed?
- Does the project include the topic of climate change, specifically does it include one of the areas and one of the key messages outlined in Section I.A.3?
- Does the applicant follow the technical requirements?
- Does the project include partners and are there letters of support for each partner? Do the letters verify, from a knowledgeable source, the targeted community's need? Do they document commitment from the applicant's community-based partner organizations, and the targeted schools, school district, or school systems? Do they illustrate that the targeted communities will be included in the planning and implementation processes?
- Does the applicant propose working with a community-based partner(s)? Do they describe how the partners' expertise and membership position them to ensure equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities and/or bridge pathways between in-school MWEE implementation and complementary out-of-school activities? Does the applicant describe their partners' qualifications and experience related to competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming? Does the applicant describe a mutually-beneficial partnership that uses the strengths of the community-based organizations, includes shared goals and resources, communicates effectively, and collaborates on decision-making? Is adequate compensation provided to the applicant's community-based partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project?
- Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives are realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period?
- Does the logic model show good understanding of desired outputs and outcomes for the

project?
- Does the applicant provide an effective evaluation strategy to determine if project objectives and outcomes are being met?

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (10 points)
This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

For all Priority Areas:
- Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the target community, including in-depth understanding of schools and school systems?
- Does the applicant demonstrate the capability and experience to successfully complete similar projects?

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

For all Priority Areas:
- Is there sufficient detail to verify that the budget request is reasonable for the number of participants and/or target audience to be reached?
- Are the requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits realistic and only for those personnel who are directly involved in the implementation of the proposed project?

5. Outreach and Education (10 points)
This criterion assesses whether the project involves mechanisms for significant external sharing and communication about the project by students, teachers, or project staff.

For all Priority Areas:
- Does the project involve mechanisms for significant external sharing and communication about the project by students, teachers, or project staff?
- Does the project propose community events that engage parents, other community members, etc.?
- Does the project propose peer to peer sharing for teacher and/or student (e.g., in-service days, school assemblies)?
- Will the project be publicized at conferences and to the media/social media, etc.?

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation of the Application

Once a full application has been received by the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and priorities of the application. If applications do not comply, they will be returned without further review. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

2. Merit Review

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will be evaluated and scored by independent reviewers in three review panels. Reviewers serving on these panels may be Federal or non-Federal experts in areas relevant to the priorities under consideration. Each proposal will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. The CA B-WET Program Coordinator will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review panels. Before the panels convene, each reviewer will individually evaluate and score proposals using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A. above. Scores and comments will be submitted to the Federal Program Officer and the individual reviewers' ratings will be used to establish a preliminary rank order for each panel. New proposals and proposals considered for renewal will be scored using the same criteria as outlined above, but renewal proposals will not be ranked with the new proposals, and they will be given priority over new proposals.

The panel will convene to review the ranking and comments and discuss the proposals as a group. Continuation proposals will be considered for continuation based on the comments and feedback from the panel meeting and will be independently recommended with either a yes—continue/fund, or a no—do not continue/fund.

During the panel meeting, reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Reviewers must individually submit final ranking to the CA B-WET Program Coordinator by the end of the panel meeting. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given by the review panel members. The reviewers' final ranking will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals for each of the panels.

The CA B-WET Program Coordinator will make the recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official based on rank order of each panel and the selection factors listed in Section V.C. below.

The Selecting Official will recommend selected applications to a NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award. The NOAA Grants Officer GMD will review financial and grants administration aspects of the proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205. Refer to Section VI.B. of this

announcement regarding the agency's Review of Risk and the applicant's opportunity to provide information to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). 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 other eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. 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 the applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decisions of the Grants Officer are final.

C. Selection Factors

The CA B-WET Program Coordinator will review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel. The numerical ranking from the review panel will be the primary consideration in deciding which of the proposals will be recommended for funding to the Selecting Official.

The Selecting Official shall award in 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 set out in Section I.B.1-5 and Section III.B. of the 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 National Environmental Policy Act determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendation for funding are made to the Grants Officer. See Section VI.B. of this announcement.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, or ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories to the extent authorized. Selected applicants may be asked to modify objectives, project plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the spring 2021. Funding is expected to be awarded August 1, 2021. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to August 1, 2021.

Successful applicants will receive electronic notification that the application has been funded from the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification will be sent by email from Grants Online to the institution's Authorizing Official. The official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the collaboration duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement in the activities of each partnership will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Project activities should not be initiated in the expectation of Federal funding until a notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Office.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding (declined) or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements prescribed in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications).

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's online grants management system, Grants Online. The CD-450 award cover page is viewable at https://connection.commerce.gov/sites/connection.commerce.gov/files/media/files/2016/cd-450_april_2017.pdf. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online. Also, each recipient will need to have a U.S. Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payment (ASAP) account in order to draw funds electronically.

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 https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online at https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA in the Grants Online award package may contain special award conditions unique to this program and the applicant's project, including conditions that may limit the use of funds for activities due to outstanding environmental compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award, such as due diligence documentation, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements

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 https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
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 https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200

3. DOC Terms and Conditions
Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at https://www.ago.noaa.gov.

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. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not 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. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
If recommended for funding, applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for each project, which seeks NOAA funding. Detailed information on NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: https://www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative order 216-6 for NEPA, https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations https://ceq.doe.gov/laws-regulations/regulations.html.
If needed by NOAA for NEPA assessment, applicants will be asked 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. The 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.

6. Data Sharing Plan
This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the proposal.

7. Unpaid or Delinquent Tax Liability
When applicable under 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.

8. 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.

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.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients are required to provide semi-annual financial and performance reports consistent with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports and a comprehensive evaluation report.

1. Financial Reports
All financial reports shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants Online system, https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. Deadlines and financial forms can be found at: https://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/finforms.html.

2. Performance Reports
Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Electronic submission of performance reports is required through the NOAA Grants Online system, https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. The semi-annual reports must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. A final comprehensive report is due at the end of the award period. The final comprehensive report shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants Online. It is recommended that recipients follow the progress report format provided in the following link: https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/archive/news/bwet/docs/grant_report_format.pdf.

In addition, The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at https://www.fsrs.gov/ on all sub-awards over $25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the National Marine Sanctuaries CA B-WET website at: https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html or contact Seaberry Nachbar, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary office; 99 Pacific Street, Bldg. 455A, Monterey, CA 93940, or by phone at (831) 647-4204.

VIII. Other Information

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 proposal preparation costs. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

Applicants should be in compliance with requirements in any existing NOAA grants and/or cooperative funding agreements or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer in order to receive funds.

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with 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.