

Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program FY21

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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: Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program FY21

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2021-2006522

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

Dates: Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on August 21, 2020

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is seeking proposals under the Great Lakes Bay B-WET program (<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bwet/greatlakes/>). The Great Lakes B-WET program is a competitive grant program that supports existing, high quality environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new, innovative programs, and encourages capacity building and partnership development for environmental and place-based education programs throughout the entire Great Lakes watershed. Successful projects provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for students and related professional development for teachers, while advancing regional Great Lakes watershed education priorities. The Great Lakes B-WET program is funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (<https://www.glri.us/>).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA B-WET 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, Hawaii, Gulf of Mexico, New England, Pacific Northwest, and Great Lakes. Four of the seven B-WET regions are coordinated by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater areas encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. The Great Lakes B-WET program was established in 2011 with funding provided by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

For the purposes of this solicitation, the Great Lakes region includes counties in the Great Lakes watershed in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, education projects must target teachers and/or students in the above defined Great Lakes watershed.

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET Program, have been shown to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), thus contributing to NOAA's obligations under the America Competes Act (33 USC 893a(a)).

DEFINING THE MEANINGFUL WATERSHED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE (MWEE)

The primary delivery of B-WET is through competitive funding that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). MWEEs are multi-stage activities that

include learning both outdoors and in the classroom, and aim to increase the environmental literacy of all participants. Teachers should support students to investigate topics both locally and globally that are of interest to them, learn they have control over the outcome of environmental issues, identify actions available to address these issues, and understand the value of those actions. More information about the MWEE can be found here:

<https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience>

MWEEs are defined as follows:

1. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for Students: MWEEs for students should be learner-centered and focused on questions, problems, and issues to be investigated through collecting, analyzing and sharing data; learning protocols; exploring models; and examining natural phenomena. These activities, grounded in best practices and the context of the local community and culture, help increase student interest, motivation, and attitudes toward learning, and achieve environmental stewardship. As a result of the MWEE activities, students should have an understanding of basic watershed concepts, as well as the interaction between natural systems (e.g. wildlife, plants, and water cycle) and social systems (e.g. communities, transportation systems, and schools), highlighting the connection between human activity and environmental conditions. MWEEs consist of multiple components as defined below.

1.1 Issue definition and background research

Students focus on an environmental question, problem, or issue requiring background research and investigation. They learn more about the issue through classroom instruction, the collection of data, conducting experiments, talking to experts, and reviewing credible publications. This process should be age-appropriate with practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades, starting with educator-guided investigation and progressing to student-led inquiry.

1.2 Outdoor field activities

Students participate in multiple outdoor field activities sufficient to collect the data or make observations required for answering the research questions and informing student actions, or as part of the issue definition and background research. B-WET funded student projects should aim to include more than four hours of student activity time spent outdoors. Students should be actively involved in planning the investigation, taking measurements, or constructing the project within appropriate safety guidelines, with teachers providing

instruction on methods and procedures, data collection protocols, and proper use of equipment as needed. These activities can take place off-site and/or on the school grounds.

Where appropriate, professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds. Resources exist to support the effective hands-on implementation of MWEEs and the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects that provide substantial benefit to both students and the school environment. Please see the School Grounds for Learning resources available at: http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/about

1.3 Stewardship action projects

Students participate in an age-appropriate project during which they take action to address environmental issues at the personal or societal level. Participants in B-WET MWEE activities should understand they have control over the outcome of environmental issues, and be encouraged to identify actions to address these issues and understand the value of those actions. Examples of stewardship activities include:

Watershed Restoration or Protection (e.g., creating schoolyard habitat, planting trees or grasses, removing invasive species, community cleanup, stormwater management);

Everyday Choices (e.g., refuse/reduce/reuse/upcycle/recycle, composting, energy conservation, water conservation);

Community Engagement (e.g., presentations, social media, event-organizing, messaging at community events/fairs/festivals, mentoring, Public Service Announcements); and

Civic Action (e.g., town meetings, voting, writing elected officials/decision makers, advocating for policy change).

1.4 Synthesis and conclusions

Students analyze and evaluate the results of projects and investigations. Students synthesize and communicate results and conclusions to an external audience such as other classrooms, schools, parents, or the community.

2. Support for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) with Students

In addition to the components identified above, NOAA recommends that the following elements are in place to fully support successful MWEE implementation with students.

2.1 Teacher participation for the duration of the MWEE

While external partners are entirely appropriate to support MWEEs, teachers should support the experience in the classroom and in the field. Teachers are in the best position to help students make connections and draw on past lessons, serve as environmental role models, and enhance students' overall outdoor education experience and should be involved in all components of the experiences detailed above. To support them in this role, teachers should have appropriate knowledge of environmental issues and watershed concepts, skill in connecting these issues to their curriculum, and competency in environmental education pedagogy, including the ability and confidence to teach outdoor lessons and to lead students in critical thinking about environmental issues.

2.2 Integration with classroom curriculum

Experiences should be integrated into what is occurring in the classroom, and can provide authentic, age-appropriate, engaging multi-disciplinary content to address academic standards. Specifically, elements of science and social studies standards related to questioning and investigation, evidence-based analysis and interpretation, model and theory building, knowledge of environmental processes and systems, skill for understanding and addressing environmental issues, and personal and civic responsibility align well with MWEEs. Non-school activities may enrich traditional classroom curriculum when needed, though this need should be documented and supported by local education agencies.

2.3 Use of the local context for learning

The local community and environment should be viewed as a primary resource for student MWEEs. Place-based education promotes learning that is rooted in the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a student's schoolyard, neighborhood, town or community, and thus offering students and teachers the opportunity to explore how individual and collective decisions impact their immediate surroundings. Once a firm connection to their local environment is made, students are better positioned to expand their thinking to recognize the far-reaching implications of the decisions they make to the larger national and global environment.

2.4 Experiences are a set of activities over time

The MWEE includes the full duration leading up to and following the outdoor field experiences. Each component should involve a significant investment of instructional time, incorporate time for reflection, and include all students. Experiences such as tours, simulations, demonstrations, or nature walks may be instructionally useful, but alone do not

constitute an entire meaningful watershed educational experience as defined here. Projects include more than 4 hours of student time outdoors.

2.5 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/office-education/grants/noaa-assets>
<https://www.noaa.gov/education/noaa-in-your-backyard/great-lakes>
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/>
<https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/education/>
<https://www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/>
<http://www.cgll.org/>
<https://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/lessons/>
<https://greatlakesseagrant.com>

3. 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 MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will conduct MWEEs after the B-WET supported program has ended.

Based on educational research findings and preliminary evidence from the B-WET national evaluation system, the B-WET program recommends that professional development include more than 30 hours of professional development time, of which more than 10 hours should be spent outdoors. These targets are expected to support teacher change and increase the likelihood that teachers will implement MWEEs.

Where appropriate, professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds as an alternative to offsite field experiences. Resources exist to support the effective hands-on implementation of MWEEs and the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects

that provide substantial benefit to both students and the school environment. Please see the School Grounds for Learning resources available at:
http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/about

Specifically, the following elements 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 basic watershed concepts and the human connection to the watershed. 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 actions to address complex environmental issues.

3.2 Models environmental education pedagogy

Facilitators/trainers should utilize the same techniques and experiences in trainings that teachers are expected to use with their students, such as hands-on, place-based, outdoor field experiences and environmental issue investigation and action.

3.3 Allows for adequate instructional time

Professional Development trainings should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several months. Trainings should include ample opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and planning for how to use knowledge and skills gained from professional development in the classroom.

3.4 Provides ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives

Even in cases where teachers participate in robust multi-day trainings, such as summer or weekend courses, it is still essential that professional development providers have a structure in place for ongoing 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 germane to all forms of teacher professional development. When possible, professional development opportunities in environmental education should adhere to these general guidelines set forth by local education agencies.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must address the following priority (described below in detail):

Projects combining Teacher Professional Development with long-term classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for students.

All proposals should demonstrate a connection to the Great Lakes basin through the watershed system so that students understand how their actions can affect the Great Lakes ecosystem through their local watershed. All proposals must address the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan II Objective 5.2 to “Educate the next generation about the Great Lakes ecosystem.” Additionally, priority will be given to applicants who 1) show prior experience in working in the Great Lakes region, 2) show prior experience with Great Lakes regional issues, or 3) demonstrate partnerships with local organizations in the Great Lakes region on proposed projects.

The NOAA B-WET program seeks proposals that combine systematic, long-term professional development for teachers coupled with multiple MWEEs for students that are fully supported in the classroom by their teachers, ensuring that concepts of watershed education are fully reinforced throughout the school year. Proposals must address the specific elements and types of activities that define a MWEE (definition above, I. A.).

The Great Lakes watershed provides excellent opportunities for place-based environmental education. B-WET funded student projects should aim to include more than four hours of student activity time spent outdoors. Environmental learning and stewardship should be situated in places that students live, grow, and play, and they should rely extensively on hands-on, inquiry-based experiential teaching and learning that teach students to draw on multiple disciplines and ways of knowing as they consider and take action on local

stewardship needs. The Great Lakes watershed environment can provide genuine, locally relevant sources of knowledge that can be used to help advance student learning skills across the entire school curriculum.

Professional development for teachers coupled with multiple meaningful watershed experiences for students that are fully supported by their teachers in the classroom will ensure that the concepts of watershed education are fully reinforced throughout the school year. Professional development opportunities should be designed so that teachers not only understand what a MWEE is, but why this type of pedagogy is important. Providers of the professional development opportunities should allow for adequate instructional time, and have a structure in place for on-going teacher support and enrichment. The goal is to ensure that professional development experiences for the teacher ultimately benefit the student. Projects should be designed so that teachers are capable of conducting MWEEs and provide the resources and necessary technical support needed to implement an experience in their classroom.

Based on educational research findings and evidence from the B-WET national evaluation system, the B-WET program recommends that professional development include more than 30 hours of professional development time, of which more than ten hours should be spent outdoors. These targets increase the likelihood that teachers will successfully implement MWEEs. This includes any of the following types of B-WET professional development: workshops, college-level courses, professional development provider training (training for individuals who provide teacher professional development), individual teacher coaching and support (e.g., curriculum planning, shared teaching, demonstrations and/or other forms of in-school or in-field support), and/or online support (e.g., courses, webinars, discussion forums).

Where appropriate, professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds as an alternative to offsite field experiences. Resources exist to support the effective hands-on implementation of MWEEs and the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects that provide substantial benefit to both students and the school environment. Please see the School Grounds for Learning resources available at:
http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/about

All proposals submitted should also address the following universal elements:

Involve external sharing and communication: projects should include a mechanism that encourages the students to share their experiences with other students and/or the community,

e.g., through a mentoring program, newsletters, journals, or community presentations. Demonstrate partnerships: project proposals should include multiple partners. A partnership is a collaborative working relationship between two or more organizations. All partners should be actively involved in the project, not just supply equipment or curricula. Letters from each partner must be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement.

Be aligned to state and / or local learning standards

Be aligned to the NOAA Education Plan: <https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan>

Be aligned to environmental literacy principles, as appropriate: “Great Lakes Literacy Principles” (<https://www.cgl.org/for-educators/great-lakes-literacy-principles/>), “Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science” (<https://www.climate.gov/teaching/essential-principles-climate-literacy/essential-principles-climate-literacy>)

NOAA Great Lakes B-WET understands that place based environmental education may be different than pre- COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage applicants to address in your proposal any adaptations that may need to be made.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. § 893a(a), the America Competes Act, 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

The Great Lakes B-WET program is funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. It is anticipated that approximately \$850,000 may be available in FY 2021 to fund eligible applications. NOAA anticipates making approximately 12 to 17 new awards. The total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed \$80,000. The minimum Federal amount that should be requested from NOAA is \$30,000. Applications requesting Federal support from NOAA for more than \$80,000 or less than \$30,000 may not

be considered for funding.

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 receiving an award. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to issue a particular award or to cover pre-award costs unless authorized in award terms, which may include Research Terms and Conditions at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtr.jsp>, or if approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before March 1, 2021. The period of awards is a maximum period of up to 18 months. Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire award period. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. It is recommended to include the flexibility of the requested start date in your project description.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected for funding will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of collaboration, participation, or involvement of NOAA in the management of the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if the NOAA B-WET program shares 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, 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 may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, education projects must target teachers and/or students in the Great Lakes watershed.

The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that service underserved areas. The NOAA B-WET program encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing or matching funds are 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 section 200.306.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply online through Grants.gov. You may access the electronic grant application for the Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training Program at <http://www.grants.gov>. Please note that applicants must locate the downloadable application package for this program by the NOFO number (found on the first page of the NOFO) or CFDA number (11.429). Users of Grants.gov 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 website. When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site as well as the hours of operation. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

If internet access is not available, application packages may be requested from Sarah Waters - Great Lakes B-WET Program Manager (sarah.a.waters@noaa.gov, 989-884-6204).

Mail your paper application to:

Sarah Waters
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
500 W. Fletcher St.
Alpena, MI 49707

B. Content and Form of Application

The following Federal Forms are required and must be submitted with applications.

1. Standard Form 424 - Application for Federal Assistance
2. Standard Form 424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs
3. Standard Form 424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs
4. Form CD-511 - Certification Regarding Lobbying
5. Standard Form LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable

The following information should be included:

3. Title Page/Abstract (1-page limit)

Provide a one-page overview of the proposed project that conveys all essential elements and objectives of the activities. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read the summary and grasp your plan. The project summary should include:

Project name/title

Recipient Institution (name, address, phone, fax, website)

Principal Investigator and primary financial contact (name, address, telephone number, fax, and email address)

Project duration (up to 18 months, project period beginning to end dates, starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month)

Total Federal funding requested

Total project cost and cost-sharing (if applicable)

Brief project abstract (150 words suggested length)

School and community description

Number of teachers and/or students that will be involved in your project

Cost per student and/or teacher

Key partners

NOAA resources to be utilized in proposed project (e.g. assets, data, expertise)

4. Project Description (15-page limit)

The project description should describe and justify the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described below in Section V. A. Project descriptions should include the goals and objectives for your project. Include specific approaches to achieving those objectives, including methods, timelines, and expected outcomes. Include information about how the project contributes to a greater understanding and stewardship of the Great Lakes watershed. Describe the need for your project and cite timely studies or sources, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project.

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.

Project descriptions should define the target audience(s). Specifically, project descriptions should include a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served and the number of teachers and students to be reached each year of the proposed project. Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience, including anything that makes your target audience unique.

Project descriptions should outline how the project proposes to implement each component of a MWEE (fully defined above), including issue definition and background research, outdoor field activities, stewardship action projects, synthesis and conclusions based on observations and activities, integration with classroom curriculum, and use of the local context for learning. Applicants should consider including a table that clearly connects the project activities with the MWEE elements. Note what NOAA products, services, or staff will be used in program delivery. Discuss a plan for project sustainability beyond NOAA funding.

Project descriptions should include significant external sharing, communication, and stewardship. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages students and/or teachers to share their experiences with peers, the community, the environmental education community, i.e., through mentoring opportunities, presentations at conferences, in-school service days, or other public forums, media, or other community stewardship activities.

Project descriptions should include any partnership contributions, third-party match/in-kind support, and other program leverage to support their projects. Proposals should identify and describe the activities and costs supported by non-Federal sources.

Project descriptions should also identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities. Project descriptions should include a two-part evaluation

description as explained below. No more than 10% of the project costs should be spent on the evaluation components of your proposal.

(1) Project-level Evaluation: Project-level evaluation 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. Proposals should provide a project evaluation plan. For information on how to create a project evaluation plan, please see the California B-WET project evaluation website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html>.

And

(2) 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: <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation>) and consider how they can support it as part of their projects.

National Evaluation 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.

National Evaluation Part 2 (for programs with teacher professional development): For projects that work extensively 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 Evaluation website here: <http://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 their planning and budgeting process.

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: <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation>. This data collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines (OMB Control No 0648-0658).

Refer to Sections IV.G and VI.B. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity for information about the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that you may need to submit with your application, and to Section VI.B about the extent to which the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) may apply to your application.

5. Literature Cited: If references are cited, proposals should include a literature cited list.

6. Letters of Support/Partnerships

Letters of support from each partner that is making a significant contribution to the project should be included with the application package. Wherever reasonable, proposals should include partnerships with school divisions and/or the state department of education (if the applicant is not one of these entities). Projects are also encouraged to collaborate with NOAA entities as partners.

E. Budget and Budget Justification

In addition to the SF424A Budget Information form, applicants should include a detailed budget justification, or budget narrative. In the budget narrative, include a per-teacher and/or per-student cost calculation for this project. Provide justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. To assist in creating the budget narrative, applicants may find it helpful to start with the B-WET budget template found at <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bwet/greatlakes/apply.html> in the link "Great Lakes B-WET Budget Template." This spreadsheet may be added (in Portable Document Format, or PDF) as an attachment that does not count toward the page limit, in addition to the budget narrative. All budget information submitted with the application should mirror the dollar amounts on required SF-424 and SF-424A forms.

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.

Applicants must include budgets and budget justifications of sub-awards and information supporting the price or cost of 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/sub-award. All sub-awards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §§200.330-200.332 for sub-awards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements.

Grant recipients may be asked to attend a two-day Great Lakes Regional B-WET conference to be held in the Great Lakes region (most likely in Michigan) during the award period. The conference will be an opportunity for former and current B-WET grant recipients to present their B-WET projects and learn from each other. Your budget should include, in the travel category, estimated funds for these trips (such as meals, lodging, airfare and/or other transportation including rental car, shuttle, or taxi). Although this is considered an outreach and education opportunity, it should not be the sole justification to meet the outreach and education criteria; local, regional or national communication is required as well.

For information about indirect costs in the budget, refer to Section IV.F. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

F. Resumes (2 pages maximum for each key personnel)

G. Data Management Plan

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the NOAA B-WET Data Management Guidance provided below and will be considered as part of the proposal review. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

Data Management Guidance to Applicants

The NOAA B-WET program has developed this guidance to help grant applicants plan to share quality environmental data collected as part of their B-WET funded projects, where applicable. Environmental Data are defined by NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 212-15: Management of Environmental Data and Information as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena (such as animal sounds or undersea video) are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are

included in this definition, particularly if they are used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included in this definition.

Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely-used or international standards.

Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements apply to the proposed project and will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan will be considered as part of the proposal review. Note that the Federal Program Officer may require revisions to the applicant's Data Management Plan prior to recommending the application for funding.

Applicant Data Management Plans should be aligned with the following Data Management Guidance:

A. If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are primarily for education and/or the practice of making observations using scientific techniques/methods (e.g. measuring pH of water with a refractometer, measuring atmospheric humidity with a sling psychrometer, measuring percent vegetative cover using a transect, etc.) and are not intended to be shared with scientists outside of the educational program, applicants may request permission not to make data publicly accessible and obtain approval from the Federal Program Officer if funded. In this case, this element of the application should consist of a paragraph (under the heading "Data Management Plan") describing the intended use of the data and that an exemption from data sharing is requested.

B. If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are for purposes beyond education and/or the practice of making observations using scientific techniques/methods, applicants should describe (up to 2 pages, under the heading "Data Management Plan") how data will be shared, based on the following guidance:

Contents: A typical Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata

format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The plan should describe or reference the data quality control techniques that will be used or note that the data will not be quality controlled. Data that is not quality controlled should include a description of the limitations of the data or an indication of degree of uncertainty.

Technical recommendations: The NOAA B-WET program does not offer specific technical guidance. Applicants should describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Data Accessibility: The NOAA B-WET program recommends that public access to grant-produced data be enabled as follows:

- An existing publicly accessible online data server at the funded institution is to be used to host these data (describe in application); or
- Data are to be submitted to a public data repository appropriate to this scientific domain (describe in application). (e.g. The GLOBE Program - <http://www.globe.gov/>, CoCoRaHS Community - <http://www.cocorahs.org/>); or
- Funding recipients will establish their own data hosting capability (please describe in application's Data Management Plan).

Resources: Proposals are permitted to include the costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving in their budgets.

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/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at <https://go.usa.gov/xX5CU>.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on August 21, 2020 to be considered for funding. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply online through Grants.gov. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

If Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission or use of Grants.gov is otherwise not feasible, hard copy applications will be accepted with an original signature from an Authorized Organizational Representative. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery. Mail hard copy applications to Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET Program Manager, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, 500 W. Fletcher St., Alpena, MI 49707. Hard copy applications must be postmarked by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 21, 2020. Hard copy applications arriving after the deadline given above will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service or guaranteed carrier prior to the specified closing date and time. Hard copy applications received at the address above later than two business days following the closing date will not be accepted. Applicants are responsible for tracking their own applications. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Private metered postmarks will not be accepted.

Additional information about Grants.gov submissions:

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov. Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Because first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks or more, it is strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible. 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 to establish. Please consider these notes in developing your submission timeline.

If you experience a Grants.gov “systems issue” (technical problems or glitches with the Notice of Funding Opportunity 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 Organization Representative submits the application, or (iii) receive an email message from Grants.gov 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 a confirmed “systems issue,”

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.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of E.O. 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under E.O. 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOCs are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SPOC-Feb.-2018.pdf>

F. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost Rate - If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. See Section VI.B. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

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, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

Construction is not an allowable activity under this program. Therefore, applications will not be accepted for construction projects.

All costs must be reasonable, allowable and allocable. Details about allowable costs can be found in 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E "Cost Principles."

G. Other Submission Requirements

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Consequently, if your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire and include it as an appendix to your application. The questionnaire may be

found at the following link: <https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf>. This NEPA appendix does not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit. See Sections IV.B. and VI.B. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to submit via <http://www.grants.gov>. Electronic access to the full funding announcement for this program is also available at this site. If technical issues make this impractical, paper applications may be submitted to: Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET Program Manager, NOAA. (concatenated to Other Submission Requirements in NOFO - see guidance) The mailing address for paper applications is: Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET program manager, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, 500 W. Fletcher St., Alpena, MI 49707.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points, based on the following evaluation criteria and their values.

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (25)
2. Technical/scientific merit (40)
3. Overall qualifications of the applicants (15)
4. Project costs (10)
5. Outreach and education (10)

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion includes factors reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets that criterion. Applications that best address these criteria will be the most competitive. Guidance about each evaluation criterion follows:

Criterion 1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (25). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the Great Lakes B-WET Program, this will be evaluated using the following measures:

1. The project addresses the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative objective to educate the next generation about the Great Lakes ecosystem, making a direct and clear connection to the Great Lakes environment and watershed system (7 points).

2. The project addresses the NOAA Education Plan and aligns with Great Lakes Literacy Principles and/or Climate Literacy Principles where appropriate. The applicant shows a clear understanding of the state's Content Standards (6 points).

<https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan>

<http://greatlakesliteracy.net/>

http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/climate_literacy.pdf

3. The applicant demonstrates a need for the project (6 points).

4. The applicant utilizes NOAA staff, products, and/or services in the delivery of this project (6 points).

Criterion 2. Technical/scientific merit (40 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 the Great Lakes B-WET Program, this will be evaluated using the following measures:

1. There are clear project goals and objectives. The methods are appropriate for the clearly defined target audience. The applicant demonstrates the objectives can be reached within the proposed project period (10 points).

2. Adherence to MWEE principles. The proposal clearly aligns with the definition of a MWEE (See A.1 to A.3 above for more information about the MWEE) (25 points).

2.1 Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for Students includes:

- a. Background research and issue definition
- b. Outdoor field activities (4 hours minimum)
- c. Stewardship action projects
- d. External sharing of synthesis and conclusions

2.2 Support for student MWEEs includes:

- a. The student MWEE includes adequate teacher participation
- b. Integration with classroom curriculum
- c. Use of local context for learning
- d. Experiences are a set of activities over time

2.3 Teacher Professional Development for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) includes:

Increases teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues
Models environmental education pedagogy
Allows for adequate instructional time (30 hours minimum, at least 10 hours outdoors)
Provides ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives to participate
Meets jurisdictional guidelines for effective teacher professional development

3. The applicant provides an effective evaluation strategy to determine if project objectives and outcomes are being met. The project evaluation component of the project focuses on measuring changes in participants (changes can be in knowledge, attitudes, skills or conservation actions). The applicant discusses how the B-WET National Evaluation system will be incorporated into their plans for project evaluation (5 points).

Criterion 3. Overall qualifications of applicants (15 points). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the Great Lakes B-WET Program, this will be evaluated using the following measures:

1. The applicant shows capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects and shows prior experience working in the Great Lakes region (5 points).
2. The proposal includes meaningful partnerships with qualified local organizations and individuals in the Great Lakes region, and describes how the partners will contribute to the project (4 points).
3. The applicant documents letters of collaboration from all intended partnerships, including with the schools or school systems in the project (6 points).

Criterion 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 the Great Lakes B-WET Program, this will be evaluated using the following measures:

1. The applicant adequately justifies the proposed budget request. The budget request is reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represents a good return on investment (3 points).
2. A significant percentage of the budget is directly related to bringing students and teachers in contact with the environment (5 points).
3. The budget adequately details the amount of time each individual will spend on the

project, representing a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project. The requested salaries are only for personnel directly involved in implementing the project (2 points).

Criterion 5. Outreach and education (10 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the Great Lakes B-WET Program, this will be evaluated using the following measures:

1. The project involves significant external sharing and communication, possibly including a stewardship activity in the community (5 points).
2. The target audience shares their findings, experiences, or results to their peers and/or their community (4 points).
3. The applicant discusses the relevance of data sharing to their project (1 point).

B. Review and Selection Process

After the application period has closed, received applications will be screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see IV.D. Submission Dates and Times); include SF 424 authenticated by an authorized representative; were submitted by an eligible applicant (see III.A. Eligibility Information); address one of the priorities (see I.B. Program Priorities); and are materially complete (see IV.B. Content and Form of Application). If the application does not conform to the requirements and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be rejected without further consideration. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applicants with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

Applications responsive to this solicitation will be evaluated by a two-part review process; a preliminary technical review and a panel review. Reviewers may be Federal or non-Federal, and the same reviewers participate in both parts of the process.

Technical Review:

The purpose of the technical review is to evaluate each proposal's technical merit via individual evaluations of the proposals. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of 3 reviewers. Reviewers provide comments (which may be shared with applicants after the competition has concluded) and assign scores to the applications based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Federal Program Officer will use these scores to establish a preliminary rank order based on the individual reviewers' ratings. This preliminary rank order will be used in the subsequent panel meeting where final

funding recommendations are made.

Panel Review:

The reviewers will convene to evaluate the ranking and comments from the technical review and discuss the proposals as a group. Discussions are based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. During the panel meeting, reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Reviewers must individually submit a final ranking to the B-WET Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. If one or more non-Federal reviewers is used, no consensus advice will be given by the review panel members. The reviewers' final rankings will be averaged for each application to produce a final rank order of the proposals during a full panel review.

The Program Office will make funding recommendations to the Selecting Officer. The Selecting Officer will make the final recommendations for awards based on the final rank order and the selection factors below to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in a submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff. When a decision has been made (whether an award or a declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The Great Lakes B-WET ratings will be provided in rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on 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. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.A. and I.B.;
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups;
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for awards to NOAA's Grants Management Division who is authorized to obligate funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, the 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. Refer also to Section VI. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity for more information about Review of Risk.

Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer.

Subject to the availability of funds, successful applications are usually recommended within 210 days from the date of publication of this notice. The project start date should not begin before March 1, 2021.

The exact amount of funds awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) cooperative involvement with the activities of each project are determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and the ONMS Program Office. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not receiving an award. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to issue a particular award or to cover pre-award costs unless authorized in award terms, which may include Research Terms and Conditions at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>, or if approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been approved for funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division with the issuance of an award signed by a NOAA Grants Officer. This is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, which the NOAA Grants Officer will typically issue electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the authorized representative identified by the applicant on the SF-424, typically via an email from Grants Online, and the principal investigator may receive a copy. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification from the Program Office indicating that their proposals were not recommended for funding and including technical reviewers' comments upon request.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in a Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation, and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

3. Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and a current version is available at http://www.osc.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf.

4. Limitation of Liability

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. 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. Unpaid or Delinquent Tax Liability

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

6. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Requirements in Section IV.B. and G. generally implement the NOAA policy described below.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to sensitive habitats).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application.

In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

7. Review of Risk

After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official as described in Section V.B. of this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

8. 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.

9. Access to Information

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 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. NOAA Data and Publication Sharing

The Data Sharing requirements in Section IV.B. generally implement the NOAA Data Sharing Policy described below.

1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

C. Reporting

Unless otherwise specified by terms of the award, performance and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-.329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period. Reports shall be submitted electronically via the NOAA Grants Online system (<https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>).

1. Financial Reports - Information about federal financial reports is available at: <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/grantsonline/Documents/Grantees/Manuals/FederalFinancialReports.pdf>

2. Performance/Progress Reports - Suggested content and guidance related to Great Lakes B-

WET performance/progress reports can be found here: http://thunderbay.noaa.gov/B-WET/noaa_b-wet_progress_report_template.doc

3. 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 Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding the Great Lakes B-WET Program or the application process, you may contact: Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET Program Manager, sarah.a.waters@noaa.gov, (989) 884-6204.

VIII. Other Information

None.