

2021 NOAA Hawaii 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 (DOC)

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

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2021-2006759

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.473, Office for Coastal Management

Dates: Full proposals must be received by 5:59 pm Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time (HST) on April 23, 2021.

Four informational webinars with the Program Officer will occur on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 from 1:30-2:30pm HST; Wednesday, March 3, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:00 pm HST; and Thursday, March 11, 2021 from 12:00 to 1:00 pm HST. Webinar links and related teleconference information will be sent to interested applicants who sign up for an information session at <https://forms.gle/1r5qXTxGZqyegZ8p8>.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Hawaii Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program is a federal funding opportunity that meets NOAA's mission of science, service, and stewardship. The Hawaii B-WET program supports a vision of a future where societies and ecosystems are healthy and resilient in the face of sudden or prolonged change. The purpose for this financial assistance is to support our communities by developing a well-informed citizenry involved in decision-making that positively impacts our coastal, marine, and watershed ecosystems in the Hawaiian Islands. This is a competitive opportunity for grants to assist in the development of new programs, encourage innovative partnerships among environmental education programs, and support geographically targeted programs to advance environmental education efforts that complement national and state school requirements. The Hawaii B-WET program plays a foundational role as an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment on priority topics such as understanding ocean, Earth and atmospheric sciences, community resilience to hazards, and place-based environmental management. Funded projects provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for students, professional development for teachers, service-learning opportunities for students, and support regional education and environmental priorities. More

information about the B-WET program is online at <https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet>.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program was established in 2002 to create environmentally literate students and teachers through education. Recognizing that an informed community is the key to sustaining the Nation's watershed, in addition to both coastal and ocean environments, NOAA has developed B-WET programs in seven regions: California, Chesapeake Bay, Hawaii, Gulf of Mexico, New England, Pacific Northwest, and Great Lakes. The NOAA Office for Coastal Management - Pacific Islands in Honolulu administers the Hawaii B-WET program on behalf of the NOAA Office of Education and in partnership with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries in Hawaii.

The goal of the Hawaii B-WET program is to support K-12 environmental literacy programs that provide students with Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) in Hawaii's ahupuaa and related professional development for in-service teachers, administrators, or other educators serving K-12 students. Individuals that have been educated about Earth's processes, community resilience to hazards, and long-term environmental trends can become effective problem solvers, informed future community leaders, and engaged decision-makers charged with managing Hawaii's limited island resources. Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the 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).

The Hawaiian Islands are an excellent resource for environmental education and provide a multitude of "hands-on" laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about the Earth processes and the dynamic interactions of different ecosystems within an ahupuaa, as well as potential hazards that may impact a community. The islands' complex, diverse, and unique ecosystems can be brought to life in the classroom through MWEEs.

The MWEE is the backbone of all B-WET funded projects and regardless of the priority, must incorporate 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.

The NOAA B-WET program recognizes that support is needed to bridge this gap that has been created by the loss of revenue, the cancellation of programs, and the inequities that are

being exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a major contributor to environmental education programs, the NOAA B-WET program is committed to responding to the immediate needs of this pandemic and supporting these critical institutions that provide meaningful experiences for youth at all levels. While writing the grant proposal, ensure that all current federal, state (Department of Education), and City & County guidelines regarding COVID safety are followed during the time of the project implementation.

1. Defining the NOAA Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience

Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (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.

a. MWEEs for Students

The MWEE model applies multidisciplinary practices in order for students to understand how the environmental systems they are investigating relate to their community's social or cultural systems. MWEEs help connect students with their local environment and enable them to take actions and make decisions that contribute to stronger, sustainable, and equitable communities. These experiences, grounded in best practices for learning, academic standards, and the context of the local watershed and community, help increase student interest and engagement for learning, support student achievement, promote 21st Century skills, and achieve environmental stewardship.

The MWEE consists of four essential elements and five 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 five 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. This definition builds on the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup and is further informed by over a decade of B-WET project implementation and

evaluation work across the country. While these criteria represent standard national guidelines, each B-WET regional program will continue to craft and refine its own priorities that build on this MWEE definition and are tailored to the local population, geography, culture, and natural, financial, and human resources.

The MWEE consists of four essential elements that describe “what students do.” These elements promote a learner-centered approach that emphasizes the role of the student in actively constructing meaning from the learning experiences. The order of the elements depends on project design and is not always linear. For example, some elements, such as Synthesis and conclusions, should occur repeatedly throughout the MWEE.

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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).

b. MWEE Supporting Practices

The MWEE also includes five supporting practices that describe “what teachers do.” B-WET recommends that these supporting practices be in place to ensure successful MWEE implementation with students.

i. Active teacher support

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 (see Teacher Professional Development for MWEEs for specifics).

ii. 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; summer camps) may provide MWEEs, or complement and enrich traditional classroom-based MWEEs.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

v. 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:

<http://www.noaa.gov/education>
<https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/education/>
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/>
<https://www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/NIYSHI.pdf>

c. 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.

i. 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 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 Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences may be role models for their students and increase their ability to guide students in stewardship actions to address complex environmental issues.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

v. 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.

d. Additional Required Components

i. Direct connection to the ahupuaa: Experiences should demonstrate to participants that local actions within an ahupuaa can impact the greater environment and ultimately, stewardship and long-term community sustainability. Projects should encourage participants to be actively involved in stewardship behaviors and decisions that conserve, restore, and protect natural and cultural resources within the ahupuaa. Projects can focus on a specific environment within an ahupuaa (including marine environments), but applicants should demonstrate how the focus area fits within the greater concept of ahupuaa.

Cultural knowledge and understanding should be incorporated into the student educational experiences and professional development to enhance the participant interaction and connection with nature. Therefore, proposals should address the following elements:

Malama – To take care of, preserve, protect, maintain, and honor. Projects should have a

strong stewardship component that will benefit the local community.

Laulima – Cooperation/collaborative. Projects should incorporate relevant partners and engage the community in the proposed project.

Kuleana – Responsibility. Projects should strengthen students' sense of responsibility and support student voice by providing them with ownership and leadership opportunities at all stages of the project.

Imi ike – To seek knowledge. Participants should investigate the root cause of the issue identified and gain a deep understanding of all sides and aspects, both from a cultural perspective as well as from a western science perspective.

Nana i ke kumu – Look to the source. Projects should encourage participants to seek answers from kupuna and cultural experts, as well as from nature itself, to learn from the forests, streams, ocean, and related life.

ii. Experiences for all students/teachers: The Hawaii B-WET program is strongly committed to expanding the knowledge and participation of low income, underrepresented, and underserved student populations in environmental education. It is crucial for all participants to have an understanding of and connection with their own environment, therefore all students should be provided an outdoor experience regardless of where they live or go to school. The Hawaii B-WET program anticipates that a substantial portion of the target audience served by funded projects will represent communities that are underrepresented or underserved.

iii. NOAA resources: NOAA has a variety of resources that can be utilized in the Hawaii B-WET program. More information about these resources (place-based areas, expertise, data & tools) are provided below. Projects that integrate one or more of the NOAA resources are particularly encouraged because they specifically capitalize on a NOAA supported educational program, restoration project, or national education interests.

a) NOAA designated priority place-based management areas: NOAA has identified several unique environments in Hawaii as special places for place-based management. Projects should be based on, or integrally connected to, conservation at one of the following locations: Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary; Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument; Heeia National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR); Hawaii Sentinel Site Program locations; Hawaii Habitat Blueprint focus area; or West Maui or South Kohala Coral Priority Areas.

b) NOAA data & tools: Projects should access, utilize, and include NOAA data when possible. Using NOAA websites, connecting with experts, and incorporating NOAA tools are encouraged. This directly connects to NOAA's mission on sharing information with the public that will help to conserve our natural resources.

iv. NOAA content focus: NOAA has identified two areas of interest that highlight the ahupuaa, hazard awareness and preparedness, and science. More information about these resources are provided below.

a) Community resilience to hazards: Hawaii residents are susceptible to impacts from sea-level rise, extended droughts, extreme weather events, coastal erosion, landslides, ocean acidification, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis that pose serious threats to local communities, economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and environments. Understanding the balance between long-term resource management and land-use planning also affords opportunities to learn about the impact of past hazards on a community's sustainability. Building awareness of potential vulnerabilities to hazards and increasing the ability to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from such events provides participants opportunities to enhance the resilience of their own community and increases the capacity for long-term sustainability.

b) Earth, ocean, and atmospheric sciences: Experiences should encourage and inspire participants to engage in exploring and investigating Earth's dynamic processes. Projects should reflect a multi-disciplinary approach in the study of NOAA related sciences and the interaction of different ecosystems within an island ahupuaa, as well as long-term trends in average environmental conditions to support appropriate resource management, long-term sustainability, and local economies in both water-based and terrestrial-based activities.

v. Partnerships: Project proposals should include partnerships with Hawaii-based communities, organizations, schools, and/or school systems that will directly benefit from or contribute to the project. Partnerships with cultural and/or community experts will enhance the connection to the environment and are highly encouraged. Signed letters of collaboration from each partner shall be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement. Projects based on a NOAA-designated focus area should include a letter of collaboration from a NOAA office or lead site manager associated with the location.

vi. Academic standards: The State of Hawaii has adopted the Next Generation Science Standards and the Hawaii Common Core standards as the benchmarks of quality and

excellence in education. The Hawaii State Department of Education also has a department-wide framework called Na Hopena Ao, which is used to develop the skills, behaviors, and dispositions that are reminiscent of Hawaii's unique context, that honors the qualities and values of the indigenous language and culture of Hawaii. In addition, the ocean literacy principles (<http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/>), climate literacy principles (www.climate.gov/teaching/essential-principles-climate-literacy/essential-principles-climate-literacy), and energy literacy principles (www.energy.gov/eere/education/energy-literacy-essential-principles-energy-education) present guidelines on information individuals and communities should know to have a better understanding of these Earth systems. Applications should indicate how the project will align with one or more of these benchmarks of education.

2. Definitions: The terms used throughout this announcement are thus defined:

- a. Ahupuaa: A division of land, coast, and ocean where culturally-based knowledge and practices are used to manage the resources therein. The ahupuaa includes connections and interactions between the lewa (sky), honua (Earth), and moana (ocean). It is a traditional Hawaiian relationship between humans and their environment that provides a culturally-based management tool to balance environmental, social, and economic development needs. This unique relationship was premised on the need to care for the earth and its terrestrial, marine, atmospheric, and spiritual resources. Within the ahupuaa, human interactions and the use of resources were strictly managed through orally communicated laws of the land passed from generation to generation. Although this was practiced traditionally in ancient Hawaiian culture, the knowledge is still applied to today's contemporary society affording opportunities to integrate both traditional and modern methods of resource management.
- b. Citizen Science: Scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur or nonprofessional scientists where the public participates in the scientific research.
- c. Climate Science: The term for sciences related to any of the studies that deal with the long-term average of conditions in the atmosphere, ocean, ice sheets, and sea ice described by statistics, such as means and extremes.
- d. Community Resilience: The capacity of communities to prevent, prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from the effects of natural or other hazards in order to support their long-term sustainability. Resilient communities are well informed of their vulnerability to hazards and are able to comprehend the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts on their community. Examples of hazards include tsunamis, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, extreme weather events, erosion, landslides, sea-level rise, ocean acidification,

extended droughts, pollution, sewage, and effects of land use in the ahupuaa. This can also include the resilience of culture in the community, where cultural knowledge and practices are being perpetuated into the next generation.

e. Curriculum: Refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a formal course or program which demonstrates a scope and sequence of learning objectives and assessments that build upon each topic. An individual teacher's curriculum, for example, would be the specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize, teach, and assess students proficiency of a particular course.

f. Earth Systems Science: The term for sciences related to any of the studies that deal with the Earth or with one or more of its parts. Many scientists use the Earth systems science approach which treats the entire Earth as a system. Earth sciences include but are not limited to: meteorology; climatology; atmospheric chemistry; geology; geodesy; geophysics; soil science; oceanography; hydrology; marine biology; glaciology; and marine, coastal, and atmospheric sciences.

g. Environmental Literacy: An environmentally literate person is someone who, both individually and together with others, makes informed decisions concerning the environment; is willing to act on these decisions to improve the well-being of other individuals, societies, and the global environment; and participates in civic life. Those who are environmentally literate possess, to varying degrees: the knowledge and understanding of a wide range of environmental concepts, problems, and issues; a set of cognitive and affective dispositions; a set of cognitive skills and abilities; and the appropriate behavioral strategies to apply such knowledge and understanding in order to make sound and effective decisions in a range of environmental contexts.

h. Habitat Blueprint Focus Area: Forward-looking framework which outlines how NOAA thinks and acts strategically across programs and with partner organizations to address the growing challenge of coastal and marine habitat loss and degradation. NOAA improves habitat conditions which support fisheries, coastal and marine life, and provide economic, cultural, and environmental benefits. More information about Habitat Blueprint is at <https://www.habitatblueprint.noaa.gov>.

i. Hawaii: The islands of Hawaii, Maui, Kahoolawe, Lanai, Molokai, Oahu, Kauai, Niihau, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

j. Kupuna: Hawaiian word for grandparent, elder, or source (of knowledge).

k. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs): Details in Section I.A.1 of this announcement and at <https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience>.

l. Sentinel Site Program: The Hawaiian Islands Sentinel Site Cooperative is a compilation of sites that includes Midway and French Frigate Shoals in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI), and the Kona Coast on Hawaii Island. The Cooperative contains some of the most productive and unique ecological sites in US waters, and is widely recognized as one of the most valuable ecological locations in the world. For more information about the Sentinel Site Program, go to the website at <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/sentinelsites/hawaii.html>.

m. Service Learning: A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

n. Stewardship: Behaviors and decisions that conserve, restore, and protect natural and cultural resources.

o. Students: Kindergarten through high school (K-12).

p. Teachers/Educators: Formal educators for kindergarten through high school and informal educators for all audiences.

q. Watershed: Land area from which water drains toward a common watercourse in a natural basin. For the Hawaii B-WET grant program, projects should incorporate the broader concept of ahupuaa.

B. Program Priorities

Native Hawaiians were recognized for their integrated and sustainable resource management practices, along with their ability to perpetuate environmental and cultural values from generation to generation. The Hawaiian culture is recognized for keen observations of Earth's processes and applying that knowledge to create sustainable practices that supported a population of nearly one million Hawaiians prior to western contact. The practice of ahupuaa management evolved in Hawaii as a result of the interrelationship of people and their environment. The Hawaiian perspective regards humans as connected to nature as a part of their environment, not as a separate entity. This unique relationship was premised on the need to care for the Earth and its terrestrial, marine, atmospheric, and cultural resources. It provides a powerful study and management

mechanism to integrate Earth sciences and community resilience to hazards in our contemporary land-use planning, which also assists with decision-making processes.

Modern ahupuaa management focuses on knowledge of Earth's processes and fostering stewardship of the land and sea to understand the interconnectedness of the health of our environment to the resilience of our communities. It provides opportunities to promote community-based efforts with localized knowledge to take an active part in decisions about the management of the ahupuaa to balance the use of environmental resources with social and economic needs. In applying the concept of ahupuaa, communities can begin to assess the resilience of their surrounding environment by having a more in-depth understanding of Earth's processes to arrive at sustainable land and natural resource management goals.

The Hawaii B-WET program provides a venue for students and teachers to incorporate traditional and modern ahupuaa management practices into meaningful science-based learning experiences. The islands' ahupuaa provide a genuine, locally relevant opportunity for engaging in MWEEs while advancing student learning skills and problem-solving abilities through the introduction of culturally-based knowledge and practices with the general school curriculum.

All B-WET projects under this funding announcement should support the direct implementation of the MWEE, applying the concept of ahupuaa. All proposals should follow the MWEE guidance and additional required components to be successful. In addition a proposal must address one of the following priorities (and corresponding details that follow):

1. PRIORITY 1: Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students

The NOAA Hawaii B-WET program seeks proposals for projects that provide opportunities for K-12 students to participate in meaningful science-based outdoor experiences that empower students' learning. Projects submitted under this priority should be learner-centered and focused on questions, problems, and issues to be investigated through: collecting, analyzing, and sharing data; learning protocols; gathering and understanding cultural knowledge; exploring models; and examining natural phenomena. These activities that are grounded in best practices and include the concept of ahupuaa, help enhance student interest, increase motivation, and change attitudes towards learning, leading to the achievement of environmental stewardship. As a result of the MWEEs, students should have an understanding of basic watershed concepts, as well as the interaction between natural and social systems, highlighting the connection between human activity and environmental conditions. Proposals submitted under this area should address the NOAA MWEE elements in the previous Section I.A.1.

2. PRIORITY 2: Teacher Professional Development for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences

The Hawaii B-WET program seeks proposals for projects that provide teachers opportunities for professional development in implementing MWEEs. Educators should ultimately provide MWEEs for their students by weaving together classroom and field activities, within the context of their instructional coursework and current critical issues that impact the Hawaiian Islands. Systematic, long-term education programs, and professional development opportunities will reinforce an educator's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural and cultural resources, as well as develop the next generation of decision-makers.

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. Multi-day training may occur consecutively or over several months. These targets are expected to support teacher change and increase the likelihood that teachers will implement MWEEs. Proposals submitted under this area should address the NOAA MWEE elements in the previous Section I.A.1.

3. PRIORITY 3: Planning and Support for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences

The Hawaii B-WET program seeks proposals for projects that provide planning, logistical, and innovative support for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences due to the COVID pandemic. The NOAA B-WET program recognizes that the environmental education field faces multiple threats due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations will need funding to support creative and alternative approaches so they can provide online or physically distant meaningful opportunities, especially in marginalized communities. Therefore, in response to these impacts, the B-WET Hawaii program will focus on capacity building to ensure providers can adjust and adapt to this changing environment. Our intent through this priority is to allow the community to respond with solutions to their needs. Additional COVID resources are included in Section VIII of this notice.

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 organizations and institutions that are run by, located in, and work with minority and low-income communities. Projects are strongly encouraged to

develop meaningful and mutually-beneficial partnerships that honor the strengths of community organizations to directly address equity and inclusion.

Some examples of capacity building, planning, and logistical support could include:

- a. Innovative approaches to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic; setting organizations up for future MWEE implementation.
- b. 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.
- c. MWEE support materials and toolkits for teachers or students in underserved communities.
- d. Creation of field experiences in schools and communities where access to parks, beaches, and other habitat is difficult.

The B-WET program will not fund the following:

- a. Infrastructure or construction projects or tasks; and
- b. Full curriculum development without field implementation.

NOTE: The numbers associated with the priorities are for reference and are not a ranking of importance. A proposal may address multiple priorities, however, applicants must identify which priority is the primary focus of their proposal.

C. Program Authority

15 USC 1540 Cooperative Agreements; 33 USC 893a (a) America COMPETES Act; 16 USC 1442 National Marine Sanctuaries Act

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Grant awards are dependent on the availability of federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is being released prior to

final appropriations due to review and award process time frames. Based on previous appropriations, total anticipated funding for all awards is approximately \$1,000,000 and is subject to the availability of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 funding. Multiple awards are anticipated from this announcement. The anticipated number of awards ranges from five (5) to fifteen (15) and will be adjusted based on available funding. The minimum federal assistance request is \$25,000 and maximum request is \$150,000 for the entire proposed project period of up to 24 months. Applications requesting federal support from NOAA of more than \$150,000 will not be considered for review or funding. A recipient of a previous award seeking to continue an existing project beyond the approved award period must submit a new application and compete with other applications.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to establish any specific partnership or to obligate available funds for partnership activities. There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this 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, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA is not responsible for proposal preparation costs. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The performance period for FY2021 funded projects cannot exceed 24 months. The start date on proposals shall be no earlier than August 1, 2021; or the first day of any month after August 1, 2021, but no later than January 1, 2022.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for these awards may be grants or cooperative agreements. Federal cooperative agreements are different from traditional grants in that they allow for 'substantial federal involvement' in the planning and implementation of funded projects. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include the collaboration and participation of NOAA Program Officers and/or other NOAA staff in project development, planning, and implementation; technical monitoring of award activities; and coordination of funded projects with other NOAA-funded efforts as needed. Substantial involvement will be described in a condition included in a funded award. An applicant may also propose in its project that a NOAA Office serve as a partner in a cooperative agreement. If so, applicants should clearly articulate the proposed roles and responsibilities of NOAA in the application. Successful applicants will formalize the specific roles of the federal agency during the negotiation process. NOAA will address any negotiations on NOAA staff roles in any project through the substantial involvement award term.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible funding applicants are K-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, commercial and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, and Indian tribal governments conducting projects in Hawaii (Islands of Hawaii, Maui, Kahoolawe, Lanai, Molokai, Oahu, Kauai, Niihau, and/or the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands). Individual applicants and federal agencies are not eligible.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners and may contribute services in-kind. Federal agencies and employees' 'in-kind services' cannot be considered as part of an applicant's match on shared costs. If an applicant proposes a federal agency as a collaborator, applicants should provide detail on the expected level of federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to partnership services; serving in a review capacity; or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams. NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications.

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

The standard application package is available online at <https://www.grants.gov>. If this is not feasible, application packages may be requested from Mahealani Bambico, Hawaii B-WET Coordinator at Mokupapapa Discovery Center, 76 Kamehameha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720 or via email at mahealani.bambico@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should follow the full proposal application requirements stated in this announcement or applications will not be considered for review. The preferred content and form of full proposal packages should be complete and must follow the format described in this notice. Missing substantive application components will deem a proposal incomplete.

and will not be considered for further review.

Applicants should plan to upload their proposal at Grants.gov as three files: 1. Title page and project narrative, 2. Budget spreadsheet and narrative, and 3. Appendices.

Full proposal title page and project narrative must total no more than 15 pages (no smaller than single-spaced, 12-point font, exclusive of all appendices and the required government standard forms). The title page should include the abstract or summary of the project and be no more than one page. Project descriptions that exceed the 14-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Pages excised from lengthy applications will not be reviewed or considered. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors may not be understood effectively by reviewers, resulting in lower evaluation scores, so applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration.

The budget narrative and justification must total no more than 5 pages following the guidance outlined in Section IV.B.4 of this notice. The budget narrative should be limited to information that directly supports the project budget and budget justification. Any documents included in the budget that should otherwise be in the project narrative or appendices will be removed from the application before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation.

Appendices should not total more than 20 total pages and should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., resumes, references, lists of relevant work products or reports, detailed methodologies, data sources, letters of collaboration, lists of data sources, and maps). Appendices that exceed the 20-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the appendices before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Applicants should paginate their proposal and any appendices.

Required documents such as the SF-424 federal forms, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire, Data Management Plan, and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) do not count towards the page limits, and could be included at the end of the appendices after all other supplemental material or uploaded as a separate file.

Diacritical marks such as the okina and kahako are important to represent Hawaiian words appropriately. However, some computer systems do not recognize diacritical marks correctly. Using diacritical marks in file names or in the required forms may result in submission errors. Applications not received on time due to submission errors will not be

reviewed. To avoid any potential errors, omit diacritical marks when typing or copying information into the online forms at Grants.gov. Proper spelling may be used in pdf files that are uploaded to the Grants.gov workspace.

Please keep in mind that the NOAA grant system has a time limit for downloading and uploading files, so we recommend that the total file size of the application package is less than five megabytes. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

All funding application packages must contain the following components:

1. Required Government Forms

At the time of application submission, all applicants shall submit the following forms with signatures of the Authorized Representative of the submitting institution. Required forms will be digitally signed and dated when the application is submitted through Grants.gov, therefore the Authorized Representative should be the person submitting the online application.

GOVERNMENT FORM NUMBER, TITLE, WHEN APPLICABLE

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance: Required for all applicants

If a hard copy final application is submitted, it must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative.

SF-424A, Budget, Non-Construction Programs: Required for all applicants

Applicants requesting an award period longer than 12 months, should include a year 1 and year 2 breakdown of their budget on the SF-424A form.

SF-424B, Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: Required for all applicants

CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying: Required for all applicants

Applicants may put N/A for award number on the CD-511 form.

SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Required for organizations involved in lobbying

2. Title Page/Abstract (1 page max)

Provide a one-page overview of the proposed project. The title page must be prepared to be readable to a broad audience and should contain the information below. Sample title page

available at <https://goo.gl/fTEF7Q>.

- a. Project name/title
- b. Recipient institution (name, address, phone, fax, website)
- c. Principal Investigator and primary financial contact (name, address, phone, fax, email)
- d. Primary Hawaii B-WET program priority for which you are applying

Priority 1: Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students; or

Priority 2: Teacher Professional Development for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences; or

Priority 3: Planning and Support for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences

- e. Project duration (up to 24 months, project period beginning to end dates, starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month)
- f. Total federal funds requested
- g. Total project cost and cost-sharing
- h. Brief project abstract (suggested length: 150 words)
- i. Location and watershed identification
- j. School and community identification
- k. Number of teachers and/or students that will be involved in your project
- l. Key partners
- m. NOAA resources utilized in proposed project (e.g., assets, data, expertise)

3. Project Description (14 pages max)

Sufficient detail should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of proposed work to program priorities described in Section I.B of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed

scope of work raises any concerns with regard to federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. All project descriptions should include the following sections:

- a. Introduction/Overview: Describe in the narrative the specific project goals. Explain the purpose of your project and priority focus area.
- b. Background: Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA reviewers to assess the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem to be addressed, clearly articulate the driving question, and give the status of ongoing efforts to focus on the identified needs. Demonstrate the need for assistance.
- c. Audience: Identify the target audience and demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience; specifically indicate how many students and/or teachers are involved in your project. Give a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served including a map of the school and watershed included in the proposal (the map may be included in an appendix).
- d. Objective(s): Describe in the narrative the specific project objectives to be achieved. Objectives must be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and clear as to the “what and when.” Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measures. Objectives should be specific for each year of the work plan presented. Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports in which progress against these objectives will be reported.
- e. Approach/Methods: Describe in detail the various MWEE components and how the project aligns with this approach. Explain what you are going to do to meet the objectives. Provide a work plan that identifies specific tasks to be accomplished to meet project objectives and explains the technical approach (including quality assurance) needed to accomplish the tasks. This should include a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should clearly demonstrate how target audiences will be actively engaged in project activities and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. Explain who will conduct the project; list each organization, cooperator, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. Collaborations with community organizations and getting background information from community and/or cultural experts are highly encouraged. If the project includes federal partners, the roles and responsibilities of the federal partners must be clearly identified.

f. Milestone Schedule: Applicants should provide timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes. 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.

g. Project Evaluation: Explain how you will ensure that you are meeting the goals and objectives of your project. Evaluation plans may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include, evaluation tools, pre- and post tests, and/or surveys.

Project 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. Grant recipients will be required to submit a comprehensive evaluation report at the end of the project period as a special award condition.

In your evaluation plan, please describe how you will measure and document the outcomes and impacts of your project on your audience(s). Explain how your audience(s) will be different after their involvement in your project and detail how you will measure those differences. The outcomes you measure should correlate to your goals and the Hawaii B-WET program's priorities. Indicators of outcomes may be audience satisfaction with the project experience and changes in comprehension, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors. Data can be quantitative and/or qualitative and data-gathering instruments might include (but are not limited to) pre- and post tests, surveys, interviews, guided observations, or rubric-rated presentations. Please include in your supporting documents any evaluation tools that you will be using as a part of your evaluation. Indicate if your evaluation will be front end (used to determine audience needs/understandings and plan a project), formative (used to improve a project), and/or summative (used to guide judgments about a project's impact and value).

h. 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 conduct professional development for 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 (<https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation>) and consider how they can support it as part of their projects. All applicants should provide information about how they plan to support the national evaluation system, incorporate it into the project timeline, and how responses from participants will be ensured as part of their application. Applicants should indicate who will coordinate the national evaluation component and may include staff time required to complete the B-WET national evaluation in their budget proposal.

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 that focus on 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 MWEEs 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. 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.

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.

Note that this evaluation system is not intended to replace project level evaluation. While grantees will have access to their teachers' 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 the national evaluation, including background, FAQs, survey instruments, and suggested text for communicating with your teacher participants about this project, is available at <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).

i. Benefits: Identify and document the expected results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities. Indicate benefits to program participants and the local community.

j. Previously Funded B-WET Projects: Applicants are asked to include examples of what they accomplished or learned from previously funded projects through the Hawaii B-WET program, if applicable.

k. Permits and Approvals: It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. Applicants must provide a list of all known permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. You should include this required element even if permits are not required.

Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.

For work proposed within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other federally designated managed areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. For applicants who propose to conduct research or monitoring activities that may affect any species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, you will likely need an Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit.

4. Budget Narrative and Justification (5 pages max)

In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and a budget justification separated into individual tasks. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly links to the project narrative. Please provide a spreadsheet of the expenditures and a narrative justification to explain these expenditures for each budget category listed below. The budget narrative should describe, by category of

expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project narrative for the entire award period. Please explain how categorical costs are derived in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to determine if costs are ‘allowable and reasonable’ according to the cost principles referenced in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. Budget narrative categories should correspond to the standard object class categories listed in Section B of the SF-424A. For additional details, please review the NOAA Financial Assistance Budget Guidelines found on NOAA’s Acquisition and Grants Office financial assistance webpage <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/how-to-apply>. Please include a budget spreadsheet with the budget narrative that summarizes costs for the entire project. The NOAA Office of Education has a budget table example online at https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/PDF-Budget_table_model-011620-ELP.pdf. The NOAA Office of Education has a budget narrative example online at https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/PDF-Budget_narrative_model-011620-ELP.pdf.

a. Personnel:

Explain how each person will contribute to the implementation of this award. Include time commitments such as hours or % of salary.

b. Fringe:

Include % per individual(s). The budget narrative must provide a description and breakdown of the benefits received by personnel when rates are higher than 35%, unless the fringe rate is negotiated as part of the organization’s Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). A current copy of the agreement should be provided with the application.

c. Travel:

Include a description of anticipated travel and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants must state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Include information on travel directly related to program implementation (buses, anticipated mileage, accommodations, per diem rate, etc.) along with anticipated number of trips, destination, and the number of travelers.

Travel indirectly related to the program such as presenting programming at conferences, training for program staff, and other related travel costs should also be included. Applicants shall allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

Your budget should include funds for airfare, ground transportation (rental car, shuttle, or

taxi), per diem, and lodging in the travel category. All travel must comply with the requirements of the Fly America Act and foreign travel on non-US flag air carriers must receive prior written approval, and therefore, must be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. See Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Sec. G.05.d., https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%202012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf.

d. Equipment:

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs are required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Equipment purchases also require a lease vs. purchase assessment. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See 2 CFR 200.1 Equipment and 2 CFR 200.313. Most “equipment” for B-WET grants should be categorized as “supplies.”

Applicants should indicate what they plan to do with the equipment after the award period ends, as well as identify who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends if this information is known when submitting the grant application. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

e. Supplies:

Provide a breakdown of the supplies needed to complete the proposed project.

f. Contractual:

Include such expenses as evaluators, facilitators, subcontracts for field experience services, community/cultural experts, etc. The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 CFR 200.317-327.

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all subawards and indicate the basis for the cost estimates in the narrative. Describe project activities to occur and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each identified subaward that is

\$25,000 or more should include a separate SF-424A form. Detailed budget information includes:

Name of identified qualified subrecipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection: For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds, and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or subaward.

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

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

Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.

Itemized Budget: Include categories used in program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and add the indirect cost rate used.

All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.331-333 for subawards, and 2 CFR 200.317-327 for procurements.

g. Construction:

Construction activities are not allowed through the B-WET program.

h. Other:

Include information such as stipends, program fees, etc.

i. Indirect Costs:

The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate a federal agency that covers the period of the award. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 CFR 200.1 and 200.412-415. Indirect costs should be calculated on Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR 200.1. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures,

charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. All applicants requesting indirect costs should show the MTDC calculation. Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with their application package.

Non-federal entities may elect to charge a de minimis rate at 10% of MTDC as described in 2 CFR 200.414. Non-federal entities may use this rate indefinitely, but may choose to negotiate an indirect (F&A) cost rate at any time.

If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to establish a new negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

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

5. Appendices (20 pages max, page limit excludes the required items such as Data Management Plans, NICRA documentation and/or NEPA questionnaire)

a. Letters of Collaboration

Signed letters of collaboration from each significant partner must be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement. Total number of letters may not exceed five (5) letters. Individual letters of collaboration should be formatted in 12-point font, one-sided, and may not exceed one (1) page in length. Letters dated or received after the proposal deadline will not be considered for review with the proposal package.

Applicants may have more than five partners on a project. Any organization or individual named as a partner, advisor, or consultant to a project not covered by a letter of collaboration should provide a statement acknowledging that they will work with the recipient if B-WET funding is received. In lieu of individual statements, the applicant may have multiple

partners sign a list indicating their commitment as long as each partner's name, organization, and title is included. Multiple statements of commitment may be submitted on a single page, but total statements of commitment may not exceed 3 pages. Statements dated after the proposal deadline will not be considered for review with the proposal package.

Projects based on or integrally connected to NOAA focus areas should include a letter of collaboration from a NOAA office or lead management organization associated with the location. Here is a list of NOAA focus areas in Hawaii and associated NOAA offices: Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (Office for National Marine Sanctuaries); Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Office for National Marine Sanctuaries); Heeia National Estuary Research Reserve (University of Hawaii - Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology); Hawaii Sentinel Site Program locations (Office for National Marine Sanctuaries; National Marine Fisheries Service; National Geodetic Survey; National Climatic Data Center; National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service); and/or Hawaii Habitat Blueprint focus areas (Office for National Marine Sanctuaries; National Weather Service; National Marine Fisheries Service; National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service).

b. Resumes/CV

Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of two (2) pages for each person.

c. Other appendices such as references, lists of data sources, maps, syllabi, and/or agendas.

d. Data Management Plan

Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan up to two pages with their appendix. Applications that do not address the Data Management Plan will not be reviewed. 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. The Data Management Plan does not count towards the page limit.

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.

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

- i. 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.
- ii. 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 on 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 are encouraged. Note that the Federal Program Officer may require revisions to the applicant's Data Management Plan prior to recommending the application for funding.

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 (e.g., The GLOBE Program - <https://www.globe.gov/>, CoCoRaHS Community - <http://www.cocorahs.org/>) (describe in application); or funding recipients will establish their own data hosting capability (please describe in application's Data Management Plan).

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 the 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.

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

Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients:

Randy Warren

Data Manager

NOAA's Office for Coastal Management

randy.warren@noaa.gov

For questions about the Data Management Plan, refer to the contact official listed in Section VIII of this Announcement.

e. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

The NICRA with the appropriate cognizant agency must be included in the application package if indirect costs are requested. This agreement memo can be included at the end of the appendix if necessary.

6. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental compliance Questionnaire
NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking funding from NOAA. Applicants recommended for funding must complete the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity Applicants (OMB Control No 0648-0538) accessible at <https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf> before any potential awards can be processed. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application. If your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), you may identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire and including it at the end of the appendices. This questionnaire will not count toward the page limits described in the announcement, and reviewers will not evaluate content in the questionnaire as part of the merit review.

Refer to Section VI.B.5 of this Announcement for additional information about NEPA.

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>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25, which may be accessed at <http://go.usa.gov/x9PYd>. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

Applicants should: (1) be registered in the federal SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid DUNS number on an application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal

award, application, or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant. Applicants should allow a minimum of seven days to complete the SAM registration, although complete registration for SAM may take several weeks if problems arise. Registration is required only once but must be renewed once a year.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Please be advised that potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before submitting any application materials. An organization's one-time registration process may take several weeks to complete so please allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date.

Applications submitted for funding under this competition must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5:59 p.m. Hawaii-Aleutian standard time on April 23, 2021.

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. This means that it may take two days until the applicant is notified as to whether NOAA received the application, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. To account for any potential submission errors, the Program Office recommends submitting complete applications well before the deadline. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. No email and/or facsimile applications will be accepted. The Federal Program Office has a process to review for completeness. Administrative reviews generally take place after deadlines because the majority of applicants apply just before deadlines. If there are no time constraints and available resources, the federal agency may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete packages.

If for any reason applicants are unable to submit their application through Grants.gov or are concerned about possible problems associated with the Grants.gov system, they may provide a paper copy of their full application by mail. Applications submitted by mail must include all relevant application elements described above, must include a SF-424 form with original ink or valid electronic signature with a date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 6:59 p.m. Hawaii-Aleutian standard time on Friday, April 23, 2021. Private metered postmarks are

unacceptable. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Please address all mailed applications to: Mokuapapapa Discovery Center, 76 Kamehameha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720, ATTN: Mahealani Bambico. Paper applications received more than three (3) business days after the deadline will not be reviewed, and applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Under Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” some states have elected to implement processes to coordinate and review proposed federal assistance prior to application. Hawaii has not chosen to participate, but applicants from other states applying to the Hawaii B-WET competition might be subject to such a process. Such applicants are responsible for contacting their state’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC), if applicable, to find out about and comply with any such processes. To assist the applicant, contact information for SPOC is on the Office of Management and Budget web site at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>.

F. Funding Restrictions

Please note the following funding restrictions:

1. Funding may not be used to support endowments, individuals, building campaigns or capital construction, deficit financing, annual giving, or fundraising.
2. Cost Principles: Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives, which are determined by relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements.

Recipients are subject to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles” as well as any Department of Commerce implementing regulations that may be in effect at the time of award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as the costs are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
3. Reasonable amount of 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.
4. The Hawaii B-WET program should not be considered a long-term source of funds.

G. Other Submission Requirements

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov by searching the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.473). Application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the “Apply” function on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, which may be updated or revised from previous instructions that applicants may have used in the past. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the SAM.gov, which requires periodic renewals. Refer to Section IV.C for details on receiving a DUNS number and registering with SAM.gov.

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

Applicants should not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files might not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn.

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, applicants should follow the paper copy submission guidance in Section IV.D and send to Mahealani Bambico, Hawaii B-WET Coordinator at Mokupapapa Discovery Center, 76 Kamehameha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance, and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (30 points): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

For the Hawaii B-WET program this includes the following categories:

a. Does this project have significant programming that connects to the ahupuaa and is clearly

demonstrated in the project description? (8 points)

b. Are there Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences for the target audience? Does the project include the four key MWEE elements for planning or implementation: 1) issue definition, 2) outdoor field experience, 3) synthesis and conclusions, and 4) stewardship actions? (11 points)

c. Does the project incorporate NOAA resources and at least one of the two content focus areas (see pages 13-14)? Does the project involve NOAA and NOAA-related resources or programs, such as experts or data? (5 points)

d. Does the project align with the Next Generation Science Standards and State Education Standards; Na Hopena Ao framework; and/or Ocean, Energy, or Climate Literacy Principles? (3 points)

e. Does the project include cultural and/or community experts? (3 points)

2. Technical and scientific merit (27 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 Hawaii B-WET program this includes the following categories:

a. Does the project have clearly defined, focused, and realistic objectives? (4 points)

b. Does the project articulate how the objectives will be achieved? (4 points)

c. Is the driving question clear, precise, and attainable? (3 points)

d. Is this project integrated and/or associated with a school or college program? (3 points)

e. Does this project collaborate with local organizations and underrepresented communities? (4 points)

f. Does the project have a relevant project/program evaluation plan? (3 points)

g. How will the applicant implement the national evaluation? (2 points)

h. 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 environmental education provider organization)? Does the applicant articulate their specific methods for capacity building and do they define how these will ensure environmental education providers and/or teachers can implement successful Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences while adapting to the changing and challenging environment under COVID-19? (4 points)

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

For the Hawaii B-WET program questions relevant to this criterion include:

a. Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects and managing grants or contracts? (3 points)

b. Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of their target audience and ahupuaa? (2 points)

c. Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of relevant education standards and incorporates a cultural component/perspective? (3 points)

d. Does the applicant document past collaborations with education programs, schools or school systems in the Pacific? (2 points)

e. Do the partnerships enhance and support the project, which should include community organizations, underserved audiences and/or cultural experts/practitioners? (4 points)

f. Is the applicant organization/institution run by and/or serves marginalized groups, particularly minority communities? (2 points)

g. Do the letters of collaboration indicate how partners will support the project? If the project is tied to a NOAA place-based management area, is there a letter of collaboration from NOAA or a lead site manager ? (4 points)

4. Project costs (18 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

For the Hawaii B-WET program questions relevant to this criterion include:

a. Is the budget request reasonable and provides relevant budget line items in direct support of the proposed project? (5 points)

b. Does the applicant provide a detailed narrative justification of the proposed budget items? (5 points)

c. Does the budget support activities that will bring students and/or teachers in contact with the environment to allow them to create a strong sense of stewardship for their school, community, and the Hawaiian Islands? (5 points)

d. Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and/or are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project? (3 points)

5. Outreach (5 points) This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to understand and protect the Nation's natural resources.

For the B-WET program questions relevant to this criterion include:

a. Does the project involve participants in outreach or community events that demonstrate a positive benefit in their local community? (3 points)

b. Does the project involve external sharing and communication within the targeted ahupuaa and beyond? (2 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Upon receipt of a full application, an initial administrative screening will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the proposal package. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. All proposals will be evaluated by at least three independent peer reviewers, who are regional experts in the field of environmental education or specialty focus areas, through a full merit review process that includes a technical and panel review. Reviewers may be federal or non-federal, and the same reviewers participate in both parts of the review process. During the technical review, at least three reviewers will independently score each application based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A above, and the reviewers will provide comments based on the evaluation criteria. The Program Manager will establish a preliminary rank order based on the average reviewer scores from the technical review. For the panel review, the reviewers will convene to evaluate the ranking and comments from the technical review, then 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 Hawaii B-WET Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. If more than one non-federal reviewer is used, reviewers may discuss the applications, but scores and rank will be individual. The reviewer's final rankings will be averaged for each application to produce a final rank order of the proposals during a full panel review.

The Competition Manager will brief regional NOAA leadership on the panel results, and will include their input when making recommendations to the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official will make the final recommendations for the awards based on the final rank order and 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; 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. Depending on availability of funding, a proposal may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding. The Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or award only partial funding, based on the selection factors, the merit, and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives, activities, work plans, and budgets, along with providing supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in 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 other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA Grants Management Division, and Office for Coastal Management officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with NEPA and other legislation.

Risk Review: After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews under 2 CFR 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant; 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. 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 made by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of reviewer comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official, an official within the Office for Coastal Management (or their designee), anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. By geographic area
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors as described in Section I.B of this federal funding opportunity.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and

draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during Spring 2021. Applicants may receive communications to negotiate a potential award in Summer 2021. Projects should not expect to begin prior to August 1, 2021, unless otherwise directed by the Federal Program Officer during official negotiations.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email that their application was not recommended for funding after the final selection package has been approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division, which is expected to be approximately October 2021. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for a period of up to three years and then destroyed.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The Program Office will forward applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD). The applicant will be notified by the Program Office by email that their application was recommended for funding. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the Program Office is a courtesy and cannot be construed to be an official award notice. Official notification that an award will be offered happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have 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 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. Each recipient will also need to have a U.S. Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payment (ASAP) account in order to

draw funds electronically. New NOAA award recipients will be provided with instructions on how to set up an ASAP account after the official notice of award has been issued.

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. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A>.

2. UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 CFR 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 CFR 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ>.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%202012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf. NOAA will also add administrative terms for which a current version is found at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance>. These terms will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online grants management system. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports.

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.

NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 CFR 200.339-343, Remedies for Non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally

approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 CFR 200.340.

5. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <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://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted; locations; sites; species and habitat to be affected; possible construction activities; and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals; introduction of non-indigenous species; impacts to endangered and threatened species; aquaculture projects; and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases, if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

6. 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. Applicants may view this certification at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2Q9R5k63tW8Z0o5YWd0SmVsTlE/view>.

7. 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 USC 552, are found at 15 CFR 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.

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), such as 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. DATA SHARING PLAN.

Refer to Section IV.B.5.d of this announcement for details on data sharing requirements.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR 200.328-330, and Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA’s electronic grants management system, Grants Online. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule, no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award.

A comprehensive final report is due 120 calendar days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the Program Office within 120 calendar days at the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is “Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.” If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and are up to date. Applicants in their final progress report will be asked to certify that, "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding drawdown has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) and/or a final SF-270 request for advancement/reimbursement has been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division."

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory to the extent required by the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance set out at 2 CFR 200.313. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to the final progress report or submitted directly to the NOAA Program Officer.

The Program Office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete a "Submit Additional Closeout Documents" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with 2 CFR 200.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 USC 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.fsr.gov/> on all subawards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Evaluation Report

In addition to the financial and performance reports, grant recipients will be required to submit an evaluation report with the final project report for the duration of the project period as a special award condition.

This data collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Office of Management and Budget guidelines (OMB Control No 0648-0658).

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative and technical questions regarding this announcement, contact Mahealani Bambico, Hawaii B-WET Coordinator, at Mokupapapa Discovery Center, 76 Kamehameha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720, ATTN: Mahealani Bambico, or via email at mahealani.bambico@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Applicants must be compliant with requirements in all existing NOAA grants and/or cooperative funding agreements or make arrangements satisfactory to the NOAA 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, federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure 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 CFR 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential, 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 USC 552, are found at 15 CFR 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.

NOAA may implement enforcement actions, including suspending activity under the award, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved award may result in enforcement action under 2 CFR 200.339-343, which may include termination of the award.

Applicants from State of Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) Schools should contact the Office of Strategy, Innovation, and Performance - Policy, Innovation, Planning, and Evaluation Branch by email at PIPE@notes.k12.hi.us or phone (808) 586-3800 to ensure that their application complies with HIDOE policy. More information on the HIDOE process for applying for federal grants is on the HIDOE Intranet https://intranet.hawaiipublicschools.org/offices/osip/pipe/grants/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Home.aspx (HIDOE login required for access).

NOAA Hawaii 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 to the project. Please see some COVID resources for applicants for your reference.

eeGuidance for Reopening Schools has been developed by NAAEE and members of its Affiliate Network. The guide includes information and strategies for how community-based environmental and outdoor education programs can help schools to equitably reopen during and after the pandemic: <https://naaee.org/eepr/resources/eeguidance-reopening-schools>

Grantees might look to resources such as the National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative for broadly addressing the use of outdoor spaces to support their work: <https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside>

Bay Backpack resource for developing Outdoor Classrooms, Labs & Habitats: http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/project/outdoor_classrooms_labs_habitats

Nature Based Education Consortium's Outdoor Learning as a Response to COVID-19: <https://www.nbeconsortium.com/outdoor-learning-schools>