-ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY2019-FY2020 NOAA New England Bay Watershed Education and Training (New England B-WET) Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-GARFO-2019-2005875

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.008, NOAA Mission-Related Education Awards

Dates: Complete applications must be received at http://www.Grants.gov, or postmarked, or provided to a delivery service, with appropriate documentation, no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), on the closing date, February 19, 2019. Electronic submission via Grants.gov is preferred. If use of Grants.gov is not feasible or practical, paper copy applications will be accepted, but use of the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery service must be documented with a receipt. Private meter postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than five (5) business days after the closing date will not be accepted. Facsimile or email applications will not be accepted. Any application not adhering to the postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

When developing your submission timeline, know that submission via w.w.w.Grants.gov is preferred. This electronic submission is complex for first-time users. It involves several preliminary registrations which must be completed before the application itself can be submitted. Allow yourself sufficient time to submit your application electronically and to accommodate possible computer delays. Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two (2) business days after submission.

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA's Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (B-WET) is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning focused on K-12 students and their classroom teachers. This competitive grant program promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences ("MWEEs"), B-WET's signature methodology which include multi-stage activities, in the classroom and outdoors, to increase environmental literacy of all participants.

New England B-WET is one of NOAA's seven (7) regional, B-WET environmental education programs. New England B-WET promotes high quality environmental education, fosters innovative programs, and encourages capacity-building and environmental education partnerships within the six New England States: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Successful projects advance ocean, climate, and other environmental literacy goals and incorporate the goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan (https://noaa.gov/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan) through (1) student, hands-on environmental education in New England watersheds and (2) formal kindergarten through grade 12 teacher and administrator professional development and support during student MWEEs.

Proposals submitted to this competition must address and identify one of the two priorities: (1) Backyard B-WET: Investigation of Stewardship and Habitat Restoration on School Grounds, and (2) Grass Roots: Community Resilience in Changing Times. This Federal funding opportunity includes information on the application process and evaluation criteria for proposals which may request up to $240,000 in Federal funding for up to three (3) years. There is no required match contribution, and match contributions will NOT be considered as a criterion for evaluating applications.

Grant awards resulting from this competition are dependent on the availability of Federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. We release this funding opportunity in advance of the FY2019 Federal appropriations process due to extended award processing timeframes. Successful applicants are not guaranteed a specific level of funding. If funds are not available in FY2019, applications submitted in FY2019 may be carried over for consideration in FY2020, should funds become available then and if these applications remain relevant to New England B-WET priorities.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning and outdoor investigations integrated into formal classroom learning, from kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12). Established first in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the program currently exists in the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, California, Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest, the Great Lakes, and New England. New England B-WET began in 2008.

Students receive hands-on, place-based, outdoor education related to issues affecting watershed, coastal, and ocean ecosystems. Teachers, administrators, and other educators who serve in-school, K-12 audiences receive professional development to support student learning based on Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). The B-WET MWEE methodology integrates field experiences with classroom activities and instruction in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) using NOAA assets, such as datasets, reporting, websites, curriculum, experts, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and National Marine Sanctuaries. MWEEs are the foundation of the B-WET experience, used by all seven B-WET regional programs.

The New England B-WET Program

The New England B-WET program is managed by NOAA's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), in Gloucester, Massachusetts. It supports projects within six New England states: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. A project participant may be based outside the boundaries of the New England B-WET region, but proposed project activities should lie within New England, and field investigations should occur within New England watersheds. Experiences proposed outside the watershed must be well documented and justified in the application.

The goal of this New England B-WET funding announcement is to support K-12 environmental literacy programs through student MWEEs investigating New England watersheds, guided by professional development for in-service teachers, administrators, or

other educators serving K-12 students. New England watershed communities are an excellent resource for environmental education and science, technical, engineering, and math (STEM) learning. Coastal and estuarine, tidal and non-tidal waters, and the surrounding landscapes provide hands-on, place-based laboratories where students can see, touch, investigate, and learn about their watersheds and the greater environment in an integrated fashion.

Successful applications will use MWEE best practices to advance ocean, climate, and other environmental literacy goals. MWEE best practices were developed using environmental education research and evaluation results and lessons learned over more than a decade of B-WET program implementation. Evaluation has demonstrated tangible links between student participation in B-WET-funded MWEEs and an increase in environmental literacy and stewardship.

You can find the definition of the MWEE at

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

Please familiarize yourself with these materials before you apply.

Here are more specific details about the MWEE and what we will look for in an application:

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1. The Student MWEE – 4 Essential Components

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

b. Outdoor field activities: Students participate in multiple, outdoor field activities to collect data, to make observations as part of issue definition and background research, or to make observations that answer a research question which students have helped to define. Students are actively involved in defining the issue, the problem, or the research question, in planning the investigation, in taking measurements or constructing the project within age-appropriate safety guidelines, with teachers providing instruction on methods and procedures, data collection protocols, and the proper use of equipment, as needed. These activities can take place on school grounds and/or off-site.

c. Stewardship action projects: Students will participate in an age-appropriate project to proactively address environmental issues at a personal or societal level. Participants in B-WET MWEE activities learn that they have some control and responsibility for the outcome of environmental issues, identify actions to address these issues, and understand the value of those actions. Examples of stewardship activities include, but are not limited to:

Watershed Restoration or Protection, e.g., modifying schoolyard habitat, planting trees or grasses, identifying and removing invasive species, cleaning up communities, evaluating and managing stormwater runoff.

Everyday Choices, e.g., reduce, reuse, recycle, upcycle programs; composting, energy conservation, water conservation.

Community Engagement, e.g., via presentations; use of social media; organizing events; messaging at community events, fairs, festivals; mentoring, public service announcements, flyers, posters.

Civic Action, e.g., participation in town meetings, voting, writing or meeting with elected officials and decision-makers.

d. Synthesis and conclusions: Students analyze and evaluate the results of their

investigations and stewardship. They synthesize and communicate results and conclusions to external audiences, e.g., other classrooms, schools, parents, to the broader community.

Support for student MWEEs: The following five elements support successful implementation of student MWEEs:

(1) Teacher participation for the duration of the MWEE. In-school teachers should support the MWEE experience in the classroom and in the field. They will provide the continuity necessary to help students make essential connections, draw on past lessons, serve as environmental role models, and enhance students' overall outdoor education experience. They need the ability, the confidence, and the commitment to lead students in critical thinking about environmental issues in the classroom as well as outdoors. Thus, teachers need knowledge of environmental issues, including watershed concepts, skill in connecting watershed issues to their curriculum, and competency in environmental education pedagogy.

(2) Integration with the classroom curriculum. Teachers, schools, and school systems should all integrate outdoor experiences into what is occurring in the classroom. These outdoor experiences should provide authentic, age-appropriate, engaging, multi-disciplinary content to address academic standards. Specifically, science and social studies standards related to questioning and investigation, evidence-based analysis and interpretation, model and theory building, knowledge of environmental processes and systems, skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues, and personal and civic responsibility, all align well with MWEEs. Non-school activities may enrich the traditional classroom curriculum but should not be the focus of the MWEE.

(3) Use of the local context for learning. The local community and environment are primary resources for student MWEEs. Place-based education promotes learning rooted in the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a student's schoolyard, neighborhood, town, or community. Place-based education lets students and teachers explore how local individual and collective decisions impact their immediate surroundings. Once students make a firm connection to their local environment, they can expand their thinking to recognize the far-reaching implications of the decisions they make with respect to the state, regional, national, and global environments, fostering community resilience.

(4) Experiences are a set of activities over time. MWEEs include everything leading up to outdoor field experiences, the outdoor field experiences themselves, and follow-up to the outdoor field experiences. Each component should involve a significant investment of instructional time, as well as time for assessment and reflection, and should include all students. Single events (tours, simulations, demonstrations, nature walks) are not a MWEE for the purposes of this grant competition.

(5) Includes NOAA assets, including personnel and resources. Environmental professionals can be role models for student career choices and provide proactive examples of scientific/environmental stewardship. NOAA has personnel, products, and services, including a cadre of professional and scientific experts, to support environmental instruction in the classroom and in the field. For an introduction to NOAA assets for environmental education, please see:

https://www.noaa.gov/education

https://www.weather.gov/wrn/

2. Teacher MWEEs and Professional Development Training

Professional development training should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds as well as in offsite field experiences. Resources exist to support the effective, hands-on implementation of MWEEs and the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects that benefit teachers, students, the school system, and the environment. Please see the “School Grounds for Learning” resources available at:

http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/about

Teachers need skills in environmental education and MWEEs to address the curriculum

standards of multiple students and local education agency initiatives. To acquire and maintain environmental education competencies, teachers need sustained, high-quality, professional development that includes ongoing support and feedback. They need confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting MWEEs so that they will integrate MWEEs into the project and into the academic curriculum after B-WET financial support has ended. We recommend inclusion of the following five elements for professional development to support teachers implementing MWEEs:

a. Increase teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues. Teachers must have an adequate level of content knowledge for their MWEE topic specific to their grade level and discipline, including an understanding of basic watershed concepts and the human connection to the watershed. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions, teachers also need a solid understanding of the facts related to environment issues, along with an understanding of diverse stakeholder values. Teachers teach; they also learn and in so doing increase their capacity to guide students in actions to address complex environmental issues, thereby serving as role models for their students.

b. Model environmental education pedagogy. Facilitators and trainers for teacher professional development should use the same techniques and experiences in their training programs that teachers will use with their students, i.e., MWEEs.

c. Allow for adequate instructional time. Professional development training should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several months. Training should include time for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and how to use these practices in their classroom and outdoors, and the knowledge and skills they have gained from this professional development training. Based on educational research findings and preliminary evidence from the B-WET national evaluation system, the national B-WET program recommends that professional development training includes more than 30 hours of professional development time, of which more than 10 hours should be spent outdoors. These targets support teacher professional development and increase the likelihood that teachers will implement MWEEs.

d. Provide ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives. Even in cases where teachers participate in robust multi-day trainings, such as summer or weekend courses, providers of professional development training need to provide a structure for on-going teacher support and enrichment. This support and enrichment can take the form of follow-up meetings, creating web-based forums for communication and feedback, establishing mentor-teachers as points of contact, or teams of teachers. Continuing education credits and stipends encourage proactive teacher participation in on-going professional development opportunities. Outreach and training opportunities for school administrators may also

sustain support for both environmental education and continuing teacher professional development.

e. Meet jurisdictional guidelines for effective teacher professional development. Each state has established guidance and recommendations germane to teachers' professional development. Professional development opportunities in environmental education should strive to adhere to the guidelines established by state and local education agencies.

New England B-WET is committed to expanding the participation and knowledge of low-income and underserved student populations in ocean, watershed, and environmental STEM education. In your application, provide demographic evidence if your project targets in whole or in part low-income or underserved populations, for example, Title I schools, minority groups, including Native American populations and tribal organizations, underrepresented communities, and rural schools.

Additional information on the New England B-WET program, including examples of projects funded to date, can be found at:

https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/awards

B. Program Priorities

This funding announcement supports the two (2) priorities described below. Applicants MUST designate a single priority in their application.

All applications, whether they address priority 1 or priority 2 under this funding opportunity must include MWEEs that directly serve both teachers and their students. Teacher professional development should include support during the school year, including assistance and co-teaching during delivery of student MWEEs. Evaluation results show that teacher training promotes teacher confidence in adopting and sustaining student MWEEs after the B-WET-supported funding has ended. Effective student MWEEs are learner-centered, focus on investigations that require collection, analysis, and communication of data, and promote stewardship action. These activities are grounded in proven MWEE best practices, defined within the context of the local community and culture, increase student interest and motivation, promote positive attitudes toward scientific inquiry, and foster environmental

stewardship. Appropriate student MWEEs will provide students with an understanding of basic watershed concepts, a knowledge of interactions and linkages among natural systems (e.g., wildlife, plants, the water cycle, etc.), social systems (e.g., among communities, transportation systems, schools, etc.), and the connections between human activities and environmental conditions.

Priority 1 – Backyard B-WET: Investigation of Stewardship and Habitat Restoration on School Grounds

Over 5,000 public schools serve more than two million public school students in New England. There are many private schools in New England as well. Funds for field investigations are often limited and costly, so projects that require transportation or site fees cannot always be sustained after the grant period ends. However, there are endless opportunities for MWEE investigations and hands-on stewardship and restoration projects on school grounds or within walking distance of a school.

Restoration projects on school grounds, on land adjacent to schools, or through walking field trips can support each of the four elements of the MWEE. When watershed and issue investigation components of the MWEE occur outside of the school grounds, the action element of the MWEE project should include hands-on habitat restoration, such as planning, implementing, and maintaining stream buffers, school forests, wildlife habitat, or the creation of outdoor learning environments. Projects that remove impervious surfaces, install barrels, or plant rain gardens are possibilities, but applicants are encouraged to suggest other types of projects. Where non-consumable equipment is critical to continuation of the project after the grant has ended, budgets may include equipment purchases for schools.

Successful Priority 1 projects may implement environmentally sustainable practices that could, for example, improve the health of the school's watershed, assure teacher confidence integrating the program into the classroom curriculum, offer authentic investigation and stewardship experiences for students, or reduce energy and maintenance costs for schools. Competitive projects might include family and community outreach opportunities, for example, peer-to-peer sharing in school, presentations at school events or at public meetings, or posting at libraries and other community spaces. Backyard-BWET schools may become "Green Schools," local examples of responsible environmental practices, reaching into communities and families in ways that few other organizations are able.

Priority 2 – Grass Roots: Community Resilience in Changing Times.

Community resilience is a GARFO Strategic Plan priority. Projects under this New

England B-WET priority will support coastal and watershed community resilience by building knowledge and appreciation of the economic, cultural, physical, geological, or other evidences of coastal, estuarine, and watershed influences on a community, in historical and contemporary terms.

Resilience and sustainability studies show a strong correlation between a community's appreciation of its history and heritage and that community's ability to withstand or recover from threats, including threats from storms, war, technological change, demographic change, etc.

Projects under this priority will support curriculum development, teacher training, and classroom and field support or co-teaching to support student investigations of biological, physical, economic, and cultural local resources that reveal their community's historical and contemporary connections to coastal, estuarine, and river resources. How did the community's watershed resources contribute to its early settlement and its cultural heritage, and now to its future potential in a time of dramatic environmental, technological, demographic, etc., change?

This priority is not restricted to investigations of fishing or coastal communities. Inland communities have powerful, significant, historical and cultural connections to rivers and lakes through such early industries as trade and shipping, manufacturing, quarries, agriculture, or shipbuilding. Teachers and students may begin with investigation as to why populations settled in a particular location. What impacts did humans have on the landscape in the past; what are their impacts now; and what are possible impacts in the future? How might those impacts affect current and future economic, social, ecological resilience, as well as vulnerability, in a time of profound social, technological, and environmental change such as we are experiencing now? Teachers and students explore these impacts, positive as well as negative, focusing on the significance of the watershed as a driver of change in the community of interest, and strategies for mitigation or promotion.

A multidisciplinary approach to this priority could involve research and data collection on biological, physical, economic, and cultural local resources that define a community's past, present, and future relationship to its watershed resources. Students could collect and analyze current and historical physical evidence on walking trips, by researching town archives, collecting oral histories from multi-generational family and community members, researching changes in demographic, physical, and biological landscapes, and reviewing weather and climate databases, census data, or other long-term datasets. Examples of associated stewardship opportunities include site restoration or cleanup, issue identification, and presentations to community groups. Water quality, the impact of catastrophic weather events, and the impact of these events on humans, animals, production, and economic drivers,

could be a tangible, valuable learning opportunity for a successful priority 2 project.

NOAA Sea Grant, National Weather Service scientists and datasets, and social scientists are just some of the "NOAA assets" available for projects under both priorities. Identify how you will monitor and measure the outcomes of your project's stewardship activities. Successful grantees will report on these stewardship activities and measurable outcomes in regular performance progress reports, and NOAA's Office of Education will use these measurable outcomes to document the educational and environmental benefits of funded projects.

To raise awareness and promote activities of a key diadromous species, a global and NOAA-Fisheries-supported initiative has designated 2019 as The International Year of the Salmon. Diadromous fish are those that spend part of their life in freshwater and part in salt water. The Atlantic salmon distinct population segment in the Gulf of Maine is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. We encourage applicants to consider projects under either priority 1 or priority 2 that also connect to The International Year of the Salmon. Such applications may include, but are not limited to, proposals that explore a community's historical and contemporary connection to Atlantic salmon and/or other diadromous species (e.g., shad, river herring, American eel), promote students' and/or community awareness about Atlantic salmon and/or other diadromous fish conservation issues such as fish passage or river health, connect students to their local rivers and watersheds, and provide examples of what humans can do proactively to ensure the health of these important ecosystems.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. 893a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency with consideration given to the goal of promoting the participation of individuals from underrepresented groups in STEM fields and in promoting the acquisition and retention of highly qualified and motivated young scientists to complement and supplement workforce needs.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

We anticipate that approximately $250,000 will be available to support three to five New England B-WET awards in FY2019. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to the New England B-WET Program.

Total Federal funds requested should not exceed $80,000 in any year. The minimum Federal funding requested for one year is $25,000. The maximum Federal funding requested for a three-year project is $240,000.

Multi-year projects (two or three years) will receive funding for only the first year of the award in FY2019. Funding for future ("out") years is always dependent on the B-WET Program's budget and on priorities in those years. Out-year funding for any award is not guaranteed, so include in your project description discrete outcomes that can be completed by the end of each year in the event that future funding does not become available.

This funding opportunity is for FY2019 and FY2020. If B-WET receives funding in both years, after FY2019 projects have been funded, we may use the ranking from the FY2019 competition to select new projects for funding in FY2020. This alternative to developing another, new funding opportunity for FY2020 acknowledges the significant effort required of applicants to develop a strong proposal, as well as the resources required by the B-WET Program Office and reviewers to conduct the competition. If we select proposals from the FY2019 competition for possible funding in FY2020, we will adhere to the standard practice of considering the remaining applications in the rank order determined in the FY2019 review process.

B. Project/Award Period

We will award grants for a maximum period of three years (36 months), but shorter term project proposals are welcomed. Applications beyond this 36-month duration will not be considered. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. The earliest start date for projects will be July 1, 2019, dependent upon availability of Federal funding as provided by appropriations, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected for funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The type of funding instrument, exact amount of funding, the scope of work, and the terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA/NMFS representatives after the application has been selected for

funding.

The funding instrument will be either a grant or a cooperative agreement. The award will be a cooperative agreement if the proposed project involves substantial NOAA Federal scientific or programmatic involvement. NOAA involvement may include planning, scheduling, conducting and evaluating proposed project activities, and frequent contact with the applicant to help solve technical problems as they arise during the project. "Substantial involvement" means that, after the award is approved for funding, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role. NOAA will NOT assume direction, primary responsibility, or a dominant role in project activities. These reside with the recipient for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared between the recipient and NOAA. Examples of "substantial NOAA involvement" may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in project implementation before subsequent steps are taken.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; institutions of higher education; community-based and non-profit organizations; state, county, local, or Indian tribal government agencies; and regional organizations.

Individuals, Federal agencies, for-profit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are NOT eligible to apply. Federal employees can serve as uncompensated partners in a project. If you wish to partner with a NOAA employee, in your application you must provide a written agreement documenting the participation, including details of the NOAA employee's involvement, signed by his or her supervisor. While applicants do not need to be located in New England, the work proposed must occur within this geographical region.

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. New England B-WET encourages applications from, or applications involving, any of the above categories of institutions. Information on minority-serving institutions and the demographics of K-12 schools can be found at:

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required. The B-WET program does not require that you share in the total cost of the project. Cost-sharing is voluntary and will NOT increase your chances of your project being selected, nor will it be considered as a criterion for ranking applications. If you choose to cost-share and if your application is selected for funding, you will be obligated to account for the amount of cost-share dollars reflected in the award documents, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. This commitment of matching dollars becomes a binding offer.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Potential applicants may contact NOAA's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov) before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of project ideas to B-WET goals and objectives, but Federal staff are NOT allowed to assist in the preparation of an application. B-WET program staff may provide you with information and clarification on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, Federal staff will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or writing letters of support for any application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

For the full application, the standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at

http://www.grants.gov

A complete, standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the guidelines in this funding opportunity. Applications that are not complete on the closing date of this announcement, February 19, 2019, will not be reviewed. Your application must contain all required documents and forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink. If the www.Grants.gov electronic signature is not used, the applicant organization's Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms over the printed signature that will appear in the signature boxes. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. An incomplete application or one that does not follow the format requirements will not be reviewed and will be withdrawn from the competition. Registered users of Grants.gov can download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If you have problems downloading the

application from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Support at 1-800-518-4726, or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have internet access, contact Deirdre Kimball (deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov, 978-281-9290) to request an application package. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, or if internet access is not available to you or your organization, you may submit a paper application.

All pages must be no less than single-spaced printed or typed, in at least a 12–point font with one-inch margins on letter sized (8.5" x 11") paper. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Mail your paper application to:

Deirdre M. Kimball

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.

55 Great Republic Drive

Gloucester, MA 01930

B. Content and Form of Application

Your application will not be reviewed if we receive it after the deadline, February 19, 2019. Applications lacking any of the required elements, or which do not follow the instructions prescribed in this funding announcement, will be deemed ineligible and eliminated from further review.

Here is some guidance on completing some of the required Standard Federal Forms:

* Application for Federal Assistance, Standard Form SF-424.

Items 18a – g (Estimated Funding ($). These items must reflect (1) the total Federal funding requested for ALL years of the project, (2) the total match, if match is a factor, for ALL years of the project, and (3) the total project cost, which equals the total Federal funding requested for ALL years of the project plus the total match, if there is match, for ALL years for the entire project.

Item 21 (Authorized Representative). Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the "Authorized Representative" section of the SF-424 Block 21. Another Authorized Representative may NOT sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21.

* Budget Information, Non-construction Programs, Standard Form SF-424A.

Submit separate SF-424A budget forms for EACH year of requested funding. In Section

B, use separate columns to indicate how Federal funds, and matching funds, if match is a factor, are broken down by each cost category, i.e., by each line item.

* SF-424B, Assurances - Non-construction Programs.

This must be completed for each submitted non-construction application.

* CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.

* SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

You must complete and submit this form if you have made or have agreed to make payment to any lobbying entity to influence or attempt to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, or an officer or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of, or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan. Recipients may not use funds awarded under a Federal grant or cooperative agreement to conduct such lobbying activities.

PLEASE NOTE: Validation or rejection of your application by the Grants.gov system may take up to two (2) business days after submission. Consider this timeline in submitting your application. Submit early!

Submission Process

Electronic submission, preferred and encouraged, is a two-step process. First, the complete application package must be successfully submitted into the Grants.gov system. If that submission is successful, the application moves into NOAA's Grants Online (GOL) system.

Required registrations: You MUST complete and maintain the following three (3) registrations to be eligible to submit an application via Grants.gov:

* Grants.gov

* Dun & Bradstreet's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)

* System for Award Management (SAM)

ALL three registrations must be completed before an applicant can submit an application. Since complete registration can take from three (3) days to four (4) weeks or longer to complete, begin the registration process early.

* Grants.gov registration. This is the first step required to submit an online application. It

is a one-time registration process.

* Data Universal Numbering System registration. All applicants must be issued a DUNS number, a unique nine-digit identifier provided by Dun and Bradstreet. You must use your Data Universal Identifier Number when applying for Federal awards. Request a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 (toll free) or through the internet:

https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

Securing your DUNS number is a free service.

* System for Award Management (SAM). All applicants must complete and maintain an active SAM registration. SAM registration must be renewed at least annually. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days to complete, and renewal may require as much time as the initial registration. SAM registration includes assignment of a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code for domestic organizations which have not already been assigned a CAGE Code. To register, go to:

https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/register/sam-registration/index.html

Registration is free.

You must renew and revalidate your organization's SAM registration at least every twelve (12) months from the date you were last certified and submitted your SAM registration, or sooner than twelve (12) months, if your applicant organization's information has changed. The primary point of contact's email address will receive a message alerting them to the entity's/entities' renewal requirements at 60 days, 30 days, and 15 days prior to SAM registration expiration. If you do not renew your registration, it will expire. You must have an active SAM registration to receive contract awards or grant payments, submit financial assistance award applications via Grants.gov, or receive certain payments from some Federal agencies.

Once you have completed all three registrations, a designated, registered Authorized Representative of the applicant must submit the application via Grants.gov. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE (3) automated email responses to the Authorized Representative:

* The first email will be received within 24 to 48 hours, confirming receipt into the Grants.gov system. This acknowledgment of receipt contains a Grants.gov tracking number which you must keep for your records. This acknowledgment indicates receipt by the Grants.gov system ONLY, not receipt by NOAA.

* The second email will indicate that the application has been successfully validated by the Grants.gov system before transmission to the grantor agency (NOAA) or (2) that it has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review, and the time of validation is the official time of NOAA's receipt of the application.

* The third email validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA's Grants Online (GOL) system for further processing.

Save all three emails. If all three notifications are NOT received, follow up immediately with both the Grants.gov Support Desk (1-800-518-4726) and Deirdre Kimball (978-281-9290, Deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov) to confirm NOAA receipt of the application package. If you use the Grants.gov Support Desk, secure a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number, and retain this record for future reference.

If you experience a Grants.gov "systems issue" (defined as technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete submission before the application deadline, print out a copy of any error message received AND call the Grants.gov Support Desk immediately. Problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered "systems issues." An applicant's failure to complete the required registrations and/or to ensure that a registered Authorized Representative submits the application on time are not "systems issues." A Grant.gov "systems issue" is a problem with the operation of the Grants.gov system, such as a temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volumes of traffic or a failure of its information technology systems. In the event of a confirmed "systems issue" or if a significant natural disaster affects submission, NOAA may allow more time for application submission.

Below is guidance on the substantive content of the application and related attachments or appendices.

Brevity and clarity will assist reviewers and B-WET regional Program Office staff in effectively processing the proposals. Do not assume prior knowledge and understanding on the part of the Program Office or the reviewers as to the information contained in the applications. Subject matter experts will review applications.

1. Project Summary

It is critical that the project summary accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the project for public dissemination. Provide a summary of the proposed project (two-page maximum). The summary must include:

Applicant Information: Applicant organization and name, title, and contact information of the Principal Investigator.

Project Information: Project title, location, requested project period (start and end dates).

Federal funding requested and identification of the New England B-WET priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal. You MUST designate a single priority. This designation will determine the subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal.

Partners: Identify collaborating partners, organizations, and contact information.

Summary: A clear description of proposed activities, anticipated benefits/outcomes. State briefly the need for your project, its goals, and objectives, the number of teacher and students you anticipate reaching, anticipated contact hours (in professional development, in classrooms, and outdoors), what NOAA assets and educational resources you will use, and what your anticipated outcomes will be for each year. It is critical that the project summary accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

Use plain language, not jargon. Avoid acronyms. Reviewers must be able to understand the purpose and expected outcome(s) of your educational proposal, including the numbers of teachers and students targeted. Someone unfamiliar with your proposal should be able to read the project summary and understand your proposal.

Project Objectives: List primary objectives for the entire project period, broken out by year, if appropriate.

Delivery method: Explain how you will reach your audience: Via workshops, field experiences, interactive programs, summer institutes, classroom outreach, etc.

Audience(s): Describe the demographics of your target audience(s), including the school division(s) and the number and types of participants you expect to reach, such as teachers and students, the specific grade levels, environmental educators, principals, etc.

Budget Information: Provide total Federal funding requested for FY2019, total non-Federal match (if applicable), and total project cost for FY2019 (Federal funding requested plus all sources of match equals total project cost). If you propose a multi-year investigation, include similar information for year two if you propose a two-year project and for year three, if you propose a three-year project.

ALWAYS list amounts in whole dollars. If match applies, specify whether match contributions are cash or third party “in-kind” contributions. Valuations for such contributions

are found at 2 C.F.R. 200.306.

2. Detailed Project Narrative (12-page maximum):

Detail what your project will achieve under the following headings: What, Why, Who, How, and When? Explain each aspect of your proposal clearly, and address each topic below. Reviewers must be able to connect proposed activities and project costs. The Detailed Project Narrative should track as tightly as possible the evaluation criteria listed under “Evaluation Criteria," in Section V.A.

What? Explain the goals and objectives for your project. Identify the ONE New England B-WET priority that your project supports. Show that you understand the MWEE and can use it to contribute to greater understanding and stewardship of the New England watersheds. Discuss what your project will do to support ocean, climate, or environmental literacy and the goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan, the GARFO Strategic Plan, and the program priority selected.

This section will be scored under the evaluation criterion 1, “Relevance to program goals and priority."

Why? Briefly describe the need for your project, including any state, regional, or national initiatives that the project supports. Describe why this project supports the priority you have chosen.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 1, “Relevance to program goals and priority," and evaluation criterion 3, “Project impact."

Who? Identify your target audience(s). Give the precise location of the project and the geographic area(s) to be served. Estimate how many students will receive MWEEs ANNUALLY in your project and how many teachers will receive professional development ANNUALLY. Provide information regarding the demographics of your audience, including percentages of students from low-income or underserved populations.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 1, “Relevance to program goals and priority," and evaluation criterion 2, “Approach and methodology."

How? How will you achieve your goals and objectives? If you propose a multi-year project, specify project objectives for each year. Detail how the project meets the definition of the MWEE contained in this funding opportunity, including student investigations and

stewardship opportunities, teacher professional development with MWEEs, and what NOAA projects, services, or staff will be used in program delivery. Refer to Section VI. of this funding announcement regarding potential inclusion of information relating to the project's potential impact under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, "Approach and methodology."

*Project-Level Evaluation Summary. Our definition of evaluation is 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. Explain how you will meet the goals and objectives of your project and measure progress on your outputs and your short-term outcomes. If your medium- and long-term outcomes can also be measured within the project period, explain your plans for that evaluation as well. Evaluation plans may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include evaluation tools, observations, and/or outside consultation. No more than 10% of the project costs should be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal. Recipients will report project evaluation results in regular, required progress reports.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, "Approach and methodology."

For detailed information on developing an education evaluation plan, visit NOAA's website:

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

* B-WET National Evaluation. In addition to project-level evaluation, we ask grantees to participate in data collection for the national B-WET evaluation. The B-WET national evaluation monitors B-WET program implementation and outcomes on an ongoing basis. We use national evaluation results to improve the B-WET program, document its value, and tailor it to program audiences. Success depends upon grantee participation. We urge all applicants to review information about the national evaluation and how they can support it as part of their project. Applicants should provide information about how they will support the national evaluation. You may incorporate the staff time required to participate in the B-WET national evaluation into your budget proposal.

The B-WET national evaluation has two parts. Part 1 is for all B-WET grantees, while Part 2 is for programs that work with teachers. See:

https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation

** National Evaluation, Part 1. One individual from each recipient organization will be asked to voluntarily complete an online questionnaire once a year for each year of the award. This questionnaire will take 30 to 60 minutes to complete and may require some internal data collection and compilation. The volunteer will encourage teachers to participate in the national evaluation and secure the email addresses of those teachers who have agreed to participate. Teachers will be notified that their email will be shared with the national evaluation team.

** National Evaluation, Part 2. For projects with a teacher professional development component, teacher-participants will complete one questionnaire at the close of their professional development training experience and another after implementing a MWEE with their students, whenever that MWEE is completed. The teacher questionnaires require about 30 minutes to complete. Grantees will receive a password-protected report link to view aggregate data from teacher-participants from their project only. Grantees with teacher-participants can view a summary of responses from their participating teachers.

Participation in the national evaluation does not replace project-level evaluation. The national evaluation will not provide the detail needed to understand, describe, and improve an individual project. However, grantees can use national evaluation information to inform and plan their project-level evaluations. For example:

** Grantees may not need to include questions in their project-level evaluation that will be answered in the national evaluation teacher instrument.

** Grantees should try to incorporate teacher participation in the national evaluation system into their professional development training requirement. B-WET encourages the use of incentives to promote teacher participation, offered upon completion of professional development training, in the national evaluation.

B-WET grantee and teacher respondents to the questionnaires will always be anonymous to B-WET and NOAA. NOAA will view the resulting data in aggregate-only at the national or regional level.

All data collection will be considered in a manner consistent with White House Office of Management and Budget guidelines (OMB Control No. 0648-0658).

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, “Approach and methodology."

When? Include a timeline, broken down by year, and a Logic Model, describing outcomes and objectives annually and over the entire project. 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. Does the project include more than 30

hours of professional development time, and is more than 10 hours of professional development time spent outdoors?

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, “Approach and methodology."

Sustainability. How will the funding request create a sustainable project after NOAA grant funds end? What curricula and other resources will be available to sustain the lessons learned? List any other sources of funding that have been requested or will be sought for the project and the status of those requests.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 3, “Project impact."

Organization and Personnel. Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Demonstrate the applicant’s knowledge and experience in delivering the project defined in the application. The principal investigator may or may not be an employee of the applicant. If she/he is not an employee of the applicant, you must provide an explanation of the relationship and roles between the applicant and the principal investigator. Include the resume or curriculum vitae of all principal investigators and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and clearly indicate their relationship to, and involvement in, the project. Include copies of any agreements between the applicant and other participants, describing the specific tasks to be performed by all participants. Agreements and resumes (2-page maximum for each major participant) should be included in the application as attachments; they will not count toward the Project Narrative’s 12-page maximum.

Describe any partnerships with other organizations and/or schools which are integral to the project. Wherever reasonable, proposals should include partnerships with school districts or divisions and/or the state department of education, if your organization is not one of these entities. We encourage collaboration with NOAA entities as partners. NOAA entities include, but are not limited to, NOAA programs, offices, and organizations such as the NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center, the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, the National Marine Sanctuary Program, the National Sea Grant College Program, the National Weather Service, the Office of Ocean Exploration, the NOAA Cooperative Institutes, the Northeast Regional Associations of the Integrated Ocean Observing System, among others.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 4, “Qualifications of the applicant team."

If you anticipate collaborating with other regional B-WET recipients to conduct a regional conference or to allow former and current B-WET grant recipients to present their B-WET projects or confer on regional B-WET programming, describe this in your Project Narrative

and include in the budget's Travel category funds for transportation (airfare, rental car, shuttle, or taxi), lodging, and per diem. Such a conference or presentation is an outreach and education opportunity, but it should not be the sole item or event addressing the outreach and education criterion. Other local communication with the public is required.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 5, "Outreach and education."

Outreach and Education. The project should include significant external sharing and communication beyond the primary audience (typically students and teachers). Projects should include mechanisms that encourage students and/or teachers to share their knowledge with peers, their school, and their local community. Outreach mechanisms could include the media (newspaper articles, websites, etc.); mentoring; presentations at conferences; in-school service days; documented sharing with other students, teachers, administrators, and the community; or other public works or forums that advance the goal of environmental stewardship, such as attending town meetings, meetings with town committees and administrators, etc.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 5, "Outreach and education."

3. Detailed Budget Narrative (4-page limit, not included in the two-page Project Summary and twelve-page Detailed Project Narrative limits).

The Detailed Budget Narrative should explain the need for Federal financial assistance. Provide a detailed spreadsheet, with the narrative, separated into Federal and non-Federal shares (if there is a match), as they relate to specific, requested line items or activities (personnel and salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contracts, indirect costs). If you are applying for more than one year of funding, the budget should be separated out by year, with a final, total budget for all years included as well. Use the recommended B-WET budget template found at

https://nmsolympiccoast.blob.core.windows.net/olympiccoast-prod/media/archive/ocean_literacy/bwet_budget_template.pdf

The Detailed Budget Narrative submitted with the application MUST match exactly the dollar amounts and line item/object classes on the required forms SF-424 and the SF-424A. Round off to the nearest dollar. Do not use cents! We recommend you prepare the Detailed Budget Narrative and spreadsheet first, then insert these numbers into the appropriate line items found on the SF-424A, and finally, complete items 18a-g on the SF-424 (see Section IV.B.).

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, "Approach and methodology."

If there are costs beyond your application's proposed Federal funds (and non-Federal

share) needed to complete the project, list all other sources of funding that have been, or will be, sought for the project and the status of each request. If no other funding has been sought, explain.

Grant recipients are encouraged to attend a state or regional B-WET meeting once during the duration of their grant. This is an opportunity for former and current B-WET grant recipients to present their B-WET project and to learn from each other. This meeting may be part of an existing state environmental or science education conference, thus minimizing travel expenses. Proposal budgets should include in the travel category funds estimated for attendance at this meeting (transportation, meals, lodging, per diem, etc.). You may allocate up to $1,000 for this expense.

The budget may include indirect costs. These are overhead costs, which cover basic operational functions (lights, rent, water, insurance, etc.) incurred for common or joint objectives, expenses that therefore cannot be assigned to a single project. If you request indirect costs, you must provide a current, approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) established with a cognizant Federal agency or an acknowledgment letter from the cognizant agency stating that you, the applicant, have submitted a request for a NICRA. An applicant without a NICRA may also propose all allowable project charges as direct costs.

If an applicant has never established an indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may either request the de minimus rate described in 2 CFR 200.414, or it may negotiate a new rate with the Department of Commerce. The negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to procedures required by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section B.06, (see:

http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2009%20October%202018.pdf)

require that within 90 days of an award start date, recipients must submit documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation, plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review and establish a new rate. The NOAA Point of Contact for information regarding indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer

NOAA Grants Management Division

1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Lamar.revis@noaa.gov

4. Appendices and Attachments (no page limit)

Appendices and attachments may include:

*Resumes/Curriculum Vitae of major participants, Participant Agreements.

*Partnership Letters of Commitment (NOT letters of endorsement). These are required, if the applicant organization has partners, such as school divisions, state agencies, or other organizations. Include letters of commitment and agreements from EACH of these partners, explaining their role in, and/or funding for, the proposed project. Do not include letters of endorsement from previous participants, teachers, or others not directly involved in project implementation, EXCEPT letters demonstrating support from the school(s) or school division(s). Letters must be included as part of the application package being submitted.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 4, “Overall qualifications of applicants."

*Timeline. The applicant must include a project schedule and work plan that indicates when each action event, milestone, product development, and evaluation will occur.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, “Approach and methodology."

*Logic Model. Projects should be accomplishment-oriented and describe expected outputs and outcomes. An example of a basic logic model template is available at

https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/evaluation.html

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 2, “Approach and methodology."

*Results from prior NOAA Support. If any principal investigator or other co-principal investigator identified in the proposal has received NOAA B-WET support in the past five years, provide the following information:

**The NOAA award number, the amount of financial support, the period of support, and the title of the project.

** A summary of the results of the completed work, including the numbers of teachers and students reached.

** Indicate whether this proposal is for renewed support.

** Describe the relationship of the completed work to the proposed work.

*Data Management Plan. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. This plan should be aligned with the NOAA B-WET Data Management Guidance provided below.

NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly available 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. Final, pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly journal articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will 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.

Data Management Guidance. The NOAA B-WET program has developed this guidance to help applicants plan the sharing of 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.

Two types of Data Management Plans are anticipated for NOAA B-WET proposals:

If applicants are not collecting data to share with scientists outside of the educational program, they may request permission not to make data collected publicly accessible, if funded. For example, environmental data may be collected or generated as part of a project but primarily to demonstrate and practice making observations using scientific techniques and methodology, e.g., measuring the pH of water with a refractometer or measuring atmospheric humidity with a sling psychrometer or measuring percent vegetative cover using a transect. If this is the case, the application should include a brief paragraph under the heading “Data Management Plan," describing the intended use of the data and requesting an exemption from NOAA’s data sharing requirements.

If environmental data collected as part of the project is for citizen science or for sharing with scientists outside of the educational project, the applicant must identify how data will be shared and how it will be made accessible based on the following guidance:

Contents of Data Management Plans for projects collecting data for purposes beyond education. A typical Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; 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 data quality control techniques that will be used or note that the data will not be quality controlled. Data that are not quality controlled should include a description of the limitations of the data or an indication of the degree of uncertainty in the data.

Data Accessibility. The NOAA B-WET program recommends that grantees ensure public access to grant-produced data in any one of a number of ways:

* An existing, publicly accessible, online data server at the funded institution may host these data (describe in the application).

* Data may be submitted to a public data repository appropriate to the scientific domain (describe in the application). Examples:

The GLOBE Program, http://www.globe.gov

CoCoRaHS Community, http://www.cocorahs.org/

* Funding recipients may establish their own data hosting capability (describe in the application’s Data Management Plan).

Proposals may include the costs of data preparation, of accessibility, or of archiving in their budgets.

The contact official for data management questions is in Section VII (Agency Contacts) of this funding announcement.

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion 5, “Outreach and education.

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

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or a Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by a Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application, i.e., a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number developed and regulated by Dun & Bradstreet ; and (iii) 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. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements, and if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and may use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Complete applications must be received at http://www.Grants.gov, or postmarked, or provided to a delivery service, with appropriate documentation, no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), on the closing date, February 19, 2019. Electronic submission via Grants.gov is preferred. If use of Grants.gov is not feasible or practical, paper copy applications will be accepted, but use of the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery service must be documented with a receipt. Private meter postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than five (5) business days after the closing date will not be accepted. Facsimile or email applications will not be accepted. Any application not adhering to the postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program may not be subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372,

Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, if their states have chosen to participate in this intergovernmental review process. Any applicant submitting an application for funding from a participating state is required to complete item 19 on the Standard Form SF-424. To find out about, and comply with, your state's procedures under E.O. 12372, see the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of participating Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) listed on the Office of Management and Budget home page:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SPOC-Feb.-2018.pdf

F. Funding Restrictions

Allowable Costs. Federal funds cannot pay for all costs a recipient incurs in the course of project implementation. Generally, allowable costs include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. For allowable costs, see 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards." All sub-awards (subgrants, subcontracts, etc.) are also subject to the Federal Cost Principles in 2 CFR Part 200, effective December 26, 2014.

Pre-award costs are generally not allowed. Any costs incurred before NOAA's Grants Officer issues a notice of award approved are assumed at your own risk.

G. Other Submission Requirements

None.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Relevance to program goals and priority (25 points)

2. Approach and methodology (40 points)

3. Project impact (19 points)

4. Qualifications of the applicant team (10 points)

5. Outreach and education (6 points)

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion includes factors reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets that criterion.

Reviewers must provide comments to justify the scores they provide for each criterion. Applications that best address these criteria will be the most competitive. Guidance about each evaluation criterion follows.

Criterion 1. Relevance to program goals and priority (25 – 0 points). Is the proposal consistent with Federal, NOAA, regional, state, and/or local initiatives and the designated priority?

1. Is the proposal relevant to the NOAA Education Plan, to the GARFO FY2015-FY2019 Strategic Plan? 5 points

2. Does the proposal support the program's ocean, climate, and environmental literacy goals? 5 points

3. Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the MWEE? 10 points

4. Does the project clearly increase environmental stewardship of New England rivers and watersheds in students? 5 points

Criterion 2. Approach and methodology (40 - 0 points). Is the approach technically sound, and does the approach meet the definition of the MWEE? Are goals and objectives clearly defined? Are costs reasonable for the number of participants, the target audience, the timeline, the effort required?

1 Are objectives realistic? Can they be achieved within the proposed project period? Are they appropriate for the target audience(s)? 5 points

2 Is the audience served within the six New England states? 3 points

3. Does target audience include low income or underserved populations? 4 points

4. Do proposed student experiences meet the full definition of the MWEE? 10 points

5. Does teacher participation satisfy the definition of the MWEE and include recommended teacher professional development training (multi-day, equal to or more than 30 hours, with at least 10 hours or more, outdoors)? 10 points

6. Are NOAA resources used? 4 points

7. Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel directly involved in implementation? 2 points

8. Does the budget adequately detail the individuals and the amount of time each individual will spend on the project? Is there a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project? 2 points

Criterion 3. Project impact (19 - 0 points). What is the likelihood of success, given time, schedule, available resources, including proposed budget?

1. Has the applicant properly defined needs of the targeted population(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the target community (communities), including an in-depth understanding of the schools and school systems? 4 points

2. Does the logic model show a realistic understanding of desired outputs and project outcomes? Does the budget line up with objectives of the proposed program(s)? 5 points points

3. Does the proposal address sustainability after NOAA funding ceases? Will teachers have the supplies they need to conduct MWEEs after training and NOAA support ends? 5 points

4. Is there an effective project evaluation to determine if project objectives and outcomes are being met? Does the applicant discuss if and how the B-WET National Evaluation will be incorporated into its evaluation plan? 5 points

Criterion 4. Qualifications of the applicant team (10 – 0 points). Does the applicant (and its partners) possess the education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project?

1. Has the applicant demonstrated the capability and experience to successfully complete similar projects? If the applicant was a previous Federal grantee, were grant administration and implementation successful? 3 points

2. Does the proposal include meaningful partnerships that will contribute to project implementation? Are those partnerships all documented with support letters and agreements? 7 points

Criterion 5: Outreach and education (6 – 0 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy pertinent to NOAA's

mission to protect the Nation's natural resources and B-WET's educational environmental mission. Specifically, what mechanisms or tools does the project propose to ensure significant external sharing and communication about the project by students, teachers, and/or project staff?

1. Does the applicant discuss the relevance of data sharing to their project? 2 points

2. Does the application propose peer-to-peer sharing for teachers and/or students, e.g., via in-service days, school assemblies, etc.? 2 points

3. Does the application propose community events that engage parents, other community members, etc., and/or will the project be publicized at conferences, in the media, etc.? 2 points

B. Review and Selection Process

There are three steps for review for each application received:

Minimum requirements review: We will conduct an initial, administrative review on each, timely-received application to ensure that it is eligible, responsive to the solicitation, and complete. Applications deemed ineligible, not responsive, and incomplete will be eliminated from further review. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily remedied. Applications cleared for minimum requirements will move forward and be evaluated in a two-phase process involving a preliminary technical review and a final panel review. Both phases are carried out with the same set of private and/or public sector expert reviewers. The two phases are described in detail below.

Preliminary technical review: Independent, written, technical evaluations from three Federal, public, or private sector experts with specific subject matter expertise will assess the technical merit of each application. Each application will be evaluated solely on the information in the application against the evaluation criteria described in Section V.A. Each reviewer will certify that they have no conflict of interest relative to each application they are reviewing before the review process begins. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. There will be no consensual discussions. NOAA will protect technical reviewer anonymity to the maximum extent permitted by law. Following completion of the technical review, individual technical scores will be combined and averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order according to their preliminary technical review score. A "cutoff score" may be established based in part on the amount of funding available for the program in Fiscal Year 2019. Applications below the cutoff will be eliminated from further consideration. Reviewers' comments (anonymous) may be shared with applicants after the competition is over and awards have been made.

Panel review: Reviewers who participated in the preliminary technical review will also participate in the Panel review. For those applications at or above the cutoff technical review score, we will conduct panel reviews to discuss these proposals in depth prior to making final recommendations. Depending upon the number of applications submitted under each priority, we may have individual panels. If multiple panels are necessary, each panel will convene separately to review preliminary rankings and comments and to discuss the projects. These in-depth discussions will raise issues and answer questions that a single reviewer may have raised during the preliminary technical review phase, or they may clarify an issue. During the panel meetings, reviewers can revise their initial technical comments and scores. After each application has been discussed, each panelist will provide his or her individual comments and a final score for each proposal they reviewed. Each reviewer must individually submit a final score for each proposal reviewed to the B-WET program staff by the end of the panel meeting. Final scores will not be based upon consensus.

Reviewers' final scores will be combined and averaged to produce a final rank order of the proposals for each panel/priority. Ranked lists from the separate panels will not be combined to establish an overall rank order for all proposals.

C. Selection Factors

New England B-WET Program Office staff will make preliminary recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official (the GARFO Regional Administrator), based on rank order for each panel and the selection factors listed below. The Selecting Official will then recommend funding based on rank order within each panel, unless a proposal is justified for selection out of rank order based upon one or more of the following seven (7) selection factors.

1. Availability of funding.

2. Balance/distribution of funds:

Geographic

Institution or type of institution

Research Areas

Project types.

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.

4. Program priorities.

5. Applicant's performance in a previous award. Factors considered here may include an applicant's fiscal accountability, implementation issues, or compliance with such grant

conditions as timely and acceptable reporting. See also Section VI.B. (Review of Risk).

6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.

7. Adequacy of environmental (NEPA) information provided to NOAA staff, if appropriate.

The Selecting Office will make the final recommendations for awards, based on the final rank order and Selection Factors referenced above, to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. 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, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternative activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. When a proposal has been selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplementary information required by the agency prior to funding 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 period, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of the project will be determined in pre-award negotiations involving the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and the New England B-WET Program Office.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

We anticipate that the competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications considered for funding will be completed by April, 2019. The earliest start date for projects will be July 1, 2019, depending upon the availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation, as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, the New England B-WET Program Office will notify successful applicants that their application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is NOT an authorization to begin performance of the project and is NOT a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the only authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorized Representative either electronically through Grants Online, NOAA's electronic grants management system, or in hard copy. Do not initiate project implementation in anticipation of Federal funding until the applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from NOAA's Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award in Grants Online.

The New England B-WET Program Office will notify unsuccessful applicants that their proposal was either (1) not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in Section IV.B. (Content and Form of Applications) or (2) that it did meet minimum requirements but was not recommended for funding at the conclusion of panel review. Unselected paper applications will be destroyed.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may also contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental or other compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These special award conditions will be applied on a case-by-case basis. We encourage applicants, i.e., the Authorized Representative, to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure that they are fully aware of the relevant terms placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Uniform Administrative Guidance

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 CFR Part 2300, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 CFR 1327.101, are applicable to awards in this program. See:

https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=befcbe397e1d1cd17e1e4f4013f00682&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5

http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf

2. Pre-Award Notice

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register Notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this Announcement and may be accessed online at:

https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf

3. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. These terms will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online 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. See:

http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2009%20October%202018.pdf

4. Limitation of Liability

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for any or all qualified projects pursuant to this Announcement or that any proposal will be selected for funding.

Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the competition described in this Announcement and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of priorities. Publication of this Announcement does not obligate NOAA to award funding for specific projects or to obligate available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, it does so at its own risk of not receiving an award or of any of these costs being included in a subsequent award.

There is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs for awards that have not been designated as "research," unless approved by NOAA's Grants Officer as part of the terms when an award is made. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for proposal preparation costs. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded to a meritorious applicant will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards. Funded awards are subject to the enforcement and termination provisions under 2 CFR

200.33-.342.

5. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that NOAA analyze the potential environmental impacts of applicant proposals seeking NOAA Federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6, can be found at the NOAA NEPA website:

https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/

In describing proposed program activities, applicants must provide detailed information on activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species, and habitat 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. See also Section IV.B. (Content and Form of Application) of this funding announcement. In addition to providing specific information for any required impact analysis, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if an assessment is required. Applicants may be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to avoid or mitigate any identified adverse environmental impacts posed by their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. If additional information is required after an application is selected for funding, funds may 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 determine impacts that a project may have on the environment.

6. Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions

When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide applicants with a certification to be completed by the applicant's Authorized Representative regarding any Federally-assessed or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under Federal law. If this form is provided to the applicant, NOAA will not issue an award until certification is executed, returned, and accepted by NOAA.

7. Review of Risk

After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the NOAA Grants Office will perform administrative reviews under 2 C.F.R. 200-205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility and qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of the applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports, and findings concerning the

applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific special award conditions that respond to the degree of risk found may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 CFR 200.207. 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.

8. Executive Order 12866

This Federal funding announcement is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

9. Minority Serving Institutions

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

10. NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards

If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at:

http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities_assault_policy.html

C. Reporting

Award recipients will submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 CFR 200.327-.329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

Financial Reports. Financial Status Reports (SF-425s) must be submitted to the Grants Officer semi-annually or as outlined in award conditions. Financial Status Reports are entered directly into NOAA's electronic Grants Online system.

Performance Progress Reports. These are required semi-annually, beginning on the award start date. The latest suggested B –WET progress report guidance is available at:

http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. This Act (FFATA), 31 USC 6101 note, requires Federal grant recipients to report information about first-tier sub awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All recipients of a new Federal grant or cooperative agreement equal to or greater than $25,000 are subject to FFATA sub award reporting requirements and must report to the Federal Sub award Reporting System (FSR). See:

https://www.fsrs.gov/

VII. Agency Contacts

For information on the New England B-WET program, contact Deirdre Kimball, New England B-WET Federal Program Officer, via email at deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov, or by telephone at 978-281-9290.

You may also direct questions about NOAA's Office of Education and its B-WET Program and this Announcement to Bronwen Rice, B-WET National Coordinator, at bronwen.rice@noaa.gov or by telephone at 202-482-6797.

VIII. Other Information

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance, and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed, and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, 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 C.F.R 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personnel or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 USC 552, are available at 15 CFR Part 4, Public Information. These regulations describe rules for the Department regarding the availability of requested materials, information, and records for the public. Applications submitted in response to this Announcement may be subject to requests for release under FOIA. If an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified bracketed, and marked as “Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information." Based on these designations, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.