FY23 NOAA New England Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program

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NOTICE OF 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: FY23 NOAA New England Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-GARFO-2023-2007744

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.008, NOAA Mission-Related Education Awards

Dates: Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on February 15, 2023 to be considered for funding. Applicants should apply online through Grants.gov.

Use of Grants.gov requires an advanced registration process that may take a few days or several weeks. In addition, when developing your submission timelines, keep in mind it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject a submitted application. Due to limited staffing of federal offices, hardcopy applications will not be accepted.

Informational webinars about the FY 2023 New England B-WET funding announcement will be held on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. ET / (meet.google.com/mem-gnso-vgd¿) and Monday, January 16, 2023 from 3 - 4 p.m. ET (meet.google.com/yee-trtr-wvd). Please join the webinars at the Google Meet Video call links listed for each. The NOAA New England B-WET Coordinator will be available to answer questions Monday through Friday, 7 am - 2:30 p.m. ET excluding federal holidays.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) is seeking proposals under the New England Bay Watershed Education and Training (New England B-WET) Program: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/noaa-new-england-bay-watershed-education-and-training-new-england-b-wet-program

New England B-WET is an environmental education program that funds locally relevant, authentic experiential learning for K-12 audiences through Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs; defined below) in New England states.

The FY23 New England B-WET funding announcement focuses on projects combining long-term, classroom-integrated MWEEs for students and teacher professional development.

Applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, projects must target students and teachers in the New England region. For the purposes of this solicitation, the New England region includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

This New England B-WET funding announcement emphasizes our strong commitment to expanding the participation of marginalized communities in watershed education and is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, including minority communities. And, it suggests that the MWEE framework can contribute to fostering an understanding of how watersheds are connected to coastal and offshore Atlantic fisheries and protected species stewardship, as well as contribute to climate change and resilience education that support climate solutions.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity includes information on the application process and evaluation criteria for proposals which may request up to $150,000 in total Federal funding for a project period of two (2) years.

Grants resulting from this competition depend on the availability of annual Federal funding, as provided in enacted Appropriation Acts. Successful applicants are not guaranteed a specific level of funding. If funds are not available in FY2023, applications submitted in FY2023 may be carried over for consideration in FY2024 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

a. Overview

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Bay Watershed Education and Training (NOAA 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, B-WET programs exist today in the Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, California, Hawaii, Pacific Northwest, Great Lakes, and New England. New England B-WET began in 2008.

New England B-WET supports grantee capacity building and connects grantees with local NOAA and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) experts, while being responsive to local education and environmental priorities. For the purposes of this solicitation, the New England region is defined as the following states: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from first-hand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder and nurturing a sense of community, will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of environmental stewardship, and promote academic achievement. Environmentally literate individuals can become effective future workers, problem solvers, and thoughtful community leaders and participants.

These programs engage youth in meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEEs) that provide memorable hands-on, experiential learning that are not typically available within traditional classrooms. It also plays a significant role in providing professional development to classroom teachers that increases their content knowledge, skills, and pedagogical expertise. Lastly, it supports the expansion of environmental literacy in a systematic manner throughout the region, including providing support for state-level capacity building.

b. Defining the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE)

All seven B-WET regions throughout the country use the MWEE as an approach to

delivering high quality environmental education, as follows. It is based on the MWEE definition developed by the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup. Additional MWEE information and resources are provided as resources on our website: www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-resources

The Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) is a learner-centered framework that focuses on investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed action. MWEEs are made up of multiple components that include learning both outdoors and in the classroom and are designed to increase environmental literacy by actively engaging students in building knowledge and meaning through hands-on experiences. In these experiences, the core ideas and practices of multiple disciplines are applied to make sense of the relationships between the natural world and society. MWEEs help connect students with their local environment and equip them to make decisions and take actions that contribute to stronger, sustainable, and equitable communities.

The MWEE consists of four essential elements and four supporting practices that build upon each other to create a comprehensive, student-centered learning experience. Throughout the MWEE, teachers provide structure, support, and encouragement as students use their curiosity and creativity to investigate and take action to address a local environmental issue. To support teacher implementation of MWEEs, B-WET has also included six characteristics that are recommended to be included in teacher professional development activities.

MWEEs are appropriate for all grade levels with content and practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades — starting with teacher-guided investigations and progressing to student-led inquiry. Using the MWEE framework helps educators create an engaging program to achieve their learning objectives (i.e., the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should be able to exhibit following instruction). Learning objectives should address academic standards but might also include other objectives, such as teamwork, social-emotional learning, and civic responsibility.

1. MWEE Essential Elements
The MWEE consists of four essential elements that describe “what students do:” Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental Action Projects. These elements, together with the supporting practices, create a learner-centered framework that emphasizes the role of the student in actively constructing meaning from the learning experiences. The essential elements are not meant to be linear. In fact, some elements, such as Synthesis and Conclusions, occur repeatedly throughout the MWEE.

1.1 Issue Definition
During Issue Definition, students learn about an environmental issue by planning and conducting background research and investigations. An environmental issue is an environmental problem, often with observable phenomena, to which community members bring a variety of perspectives. To provide structure for their exploration of the issue, students focus on a driving question that is defined by the teacher. This question is the “big picture” question that sparks curiosity and organizes student inquiry and investigations, which ultimately informs environmental actions. It should be open-ended, relevant to students’ lived experiences, and meet learning objectives. To support youth voice and deepen the learning, students are actively involved in co-developing supporting questions with teachers to better understand the driving question and environmental issue.

To explore the driving and supporting questions, students gather information by making observations, finding and reading credible sources, talking to experts, and carrying out field investigations. Students also consider environmental policies and community practices and reflect on personal, stakeholder, and societal values and perspectives to develop a comprehensive picture of the root causes of the environmental issue.

1.2 Outdoor Field Experiences
Students participate in multiple Outdoor Field Experiences to explore the driving question and strengthen their connection to the natural world. Within appropriate safety guidelines, students are actively involved in planning and conducting the field investigations, including developing supporting questions to explore the driving question in the field. Field experiences allow students to interact with their local environment and contribute to learning in ways that traditional classroom or laboratory settings may not. During field experiences, students can use their senses, scientific equipment, and technology to make observations, collect data or measurements, and conduct experiments necessary to answer their supporting questions and inform environmental action. Students who have opportunities to learn in, thrive in, and appreciate the outdoors can become informed and engaged champions for our natural resources.

Outdoor Field Experiences can take place on school grounds or at locations close to schools, such as streams or local parks. They can also take place at off-site locations such as state or national parks, wildlife refuges, marine protected areas, or nature centers that are often staffed by experts and may provide access to field equipment and facilities. A range of partners, including environmental educators, natural resource professionals, or trained volunteers, can help facilitate field experiences; however, they should be co-developed and co-taught with teachers so that field experiences support learning objectives. Teachers and partners should ensure an accessible outdoor learning environment for all participants,

including students with a range of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social abilities. They should also prepare students by providing information and discussing what students can expect to see, feel, or experience during their time outdoors to ensure students feel safe and comfortable during their field experiences.

1.3 Synthesis and Conclusions
During Synthesis and Conclusions, students reflect on each experience and investigation in relation to the issue, and share their claims and conclusions with each other. Teachers should plan for this to occur regularly throughout the MWEE. This learning and frequent reflection provide the foundation for the development of claims and environmental action that address the driving question and connect to the environmental issue. Throughout this process, students should demonstrate understanding of their investigations and conclusions with their peers or the school community. This could involve multiple disciplines and a variety of formats including discussion, journaling, presentations, graphing, performing skits or songs, or creating art.

1.4 Environmental Action Projects
As a result of their investigations, students identify solutions and develop Environmental Action Projects that directly address the issue within their school, neighborhood, or community. Students are actively engaged in and, to the extent possible, drive the decision-making, planning, and implementation of the action project. Teachers facilitate this process by forming groups, moderating, and answering questions. Students reflect on the value of the action and determine the extent to which it successfully addressed the issue.

This essential element allows students to understand that they personally have the power to bring about change by taking action to address environmental issues at the personal, community, or societal level. Taking action instills confidence in students and can contribute to students becoming environmental stewards in their communities.

Environmental Action Projects can take many forms and may fall into the following types:
> Restoration or Protection: actions that assist in the recovery or preservation of a watershed or related ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Examples include: plant or restore protective vegetation/trees; restore a local habitat; remove invasive plants; clean up litter at local beaches, parks, or school grounds; develop a school garden, natural history area, community garden, or other sustainable green space; install rain gardens to help manage stormwater.

> Everyday Choices: actions that reduce human impacts on watersheds and related ecosystems and offer ways to live more sustainably. Examples include:

refuse/reduce/reuse/recycle; monitor and save water in the face of potential drought or reduction in water availability; compost food or yard waste; research and implement energy efficient strategies or energy alternatives at school and/or at home.

> Community Engagement: actions that inform others about how to address community-level environmental issues. Examples include: give presentations to local organizations; organize community events; record or broadcast public service announcements; share information on social media; post flyers in community; share posters at community events/fairs/festivals; mentoring.

> Civic Engagement: actions that identify and address issues of public concern. Students acting alone or together to protect societal values or make a change or difference in a student's school, neighborhood, or community. Examples include: present to school principal or school board; attend, speak, or present at town meetings; write to local or state decision makers or elected officials.

2. MWEE Supporting Practices
The MWEE also includes four supporting practices that describe "what teachers do," along with their partners, to ensure successful implementation with students. The supporting practices are Teacher Facilitation, Learning Integration, Sustained Experiences, and Local Context.

2.1 Teacher Facilitation
MWEEs require that teachers support student learning for the duration of the MWEE, both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers balance roles of facilitation, direct instruction, and coaching to create a student-centered learning experience where the essential elements of the MWEE come together to support goals for learning and create opportunities for students to take active roles in the learning process. Teachers provide space for student choice and voice by creating learning experiences that center on what students value. Even when activities or lessons occur at partner sites or are primarily led by partners at the school, teachers should be actively engaged. Teachers should connect these experiences to prior learning, foster critical thinking, and lead reflection after the experience so, regardless of the facilitator, the entire MWEE experience feels cohesive to the students.

To support this level of engagement, teachers should have access to professional development opportunities that support their content knowledge, understanding of the MWEE framework, and confidence and intention to implement MWEEs independently (see Teacher MWEE Professional Development Characteristics for specifics).

2.2 Learning Integration
The MWEE is an educational framework that helps teachers meet their learning objectives in an engaging way. MWEEs are not meant to be something “extra”, but rather a means of enriching lessons for deeper student learning while meeting academic standards. To achieve this vision, MWEEs should be embedded into the school curriculum to support goals for learning and student achievement. They can also provide authentic, engaging interdisciplinary learning that crosses traditional boundaries between disciplines. Finally, the MWEE essential elements can also be used by educators in out-of-school settings (for example, after school programs, clubs, or summer camps) to enrich activities and complement school-based programming.

2.3 Sustained Experience
MWEEs rely on teachers to plan and implement a series of rich and connected learning opportunities where each essential element — from asking questions during Issue Definition through implementing Environmental Action Projects — builds upon and reinforces the others. To accomplish this, MWEEs are incorporated into a unit or multiple units, where learning happens both in and out of the classroom. This provides adequate time for students to not only reflect on the individual lessons and experiences, but also on how all of the elements cohesively come together. While an individual lesson may occur in one class period or field experience, that lesson or experience should be explicitly connected to the larger learning sequence of the MWEE.

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

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

3. Teacher MWEE Professional Development Characteristics
Professional development providers play a crucial role in preparing teachers to implement

successful MWEEs with their students. Professional development that includes characteristics such as: relevant content; explicit modeling of educational frameworks; collaboration, feedback and modeling instruction such as student-centered teaching; adequate time for professional development including time for ongoing support; and offering participation incentives that teachers value leads to a variety of positive outcomes. Professional development should empower teachers to confidently and competently use the MWEE framework to support standards-based learning that aligns with local education agency initiatives. Teachers should gain confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will be able to implement MWEEs after the professional development has ended. To set teachers up for success, the following six overarching characteristics, informed by education research and evaluation results, are recommended for inclusion in professional development to support teachers implementing MWEEs.

3.1 Increases teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues
Professional development facilitators should ensure that teachers have an adequate level of content knowledge in science, specific to their grade level and discipline, to support their MWEE. The content knowledge should also be connected to the interactions between natural systems and social systems, including human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth systems. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions about the environment, teachers must also experience and build skills that enable them to address these traditionally non-academic factors in their classrooms. When combined, this knowledge and these experiences often result in teachers who are more aware of, and more prepared for, the complexity of implementing MWEEs.

3.2 Models MWEE framework
Professional development should also provide opportunities for teachers to understand the goals and rationale behind the MWEE as a framework for fostering learning and environmental stewardship. Facilitators of teacher professional development should utilize the same techniques and experiences that teachers are expected to use with their students, such as hands-on Outdoor Field Experiences, critical thinking about environmental issues, and Environmental Action Projects.

3.3 Includes collaboration, feedback, and models high-quality instruction
Effective professional development includes peer collaboration, time for teachers to experience, plan for, and practice model activities and lesson plans, and opportunities for reflection and feedback. Collaborative opportunities that include observing effective teaching practices and replicating these practices with expert instruction and feedback, can result in higher likelihood that teachers will apply these practices when implementing MWEEs. Such opportunities also foster exchanging ideas and create a collaborative

atmosphere for changing the culture around adopting new teaching practices at multiple levels within a school system. In addition, when teachers experience high-quality instruction, such as active learning and student-centered inquiry, they are more likely to use high-quality instruction when implementing MWEEs with their own students.

3.4 Allows for adequate instructional time and ongoing support
Professional development should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several weeks or months and include time for ongoing support for teachers. Professional development facilitators should build in adequate time for the types of experience described above, including time to learn, practice, reflect upon, and design practices they learn during the professional development. Even in cases where teachers participate in robust multi-day workshops, such as summer or weekend courses, it is still essential that professional development providers have structures and opportunities in place for ongoing teaching support and enrichment. This can take the form of follow up meetings, web-based forums for communication and feedback, mentor teachers who can serve as points of contact, or teams of teachers from one particular school.

3.5 Offers appropriate incentives
Having appropriate incentives can increase participation in professional development programs. For example, teachers who participated in B-WET-funded professional development programs in the past reported that receiving a stipend or continuing education credits were the “most valuable” incentives enabling them to participate in those programs. While a variety of incentives can be offered to professional development program participants, it is clear that continuing education credits and stipends can enable participation in ways that other incentives might not.

3.6 Meets jurisdictional guidelines and engages leadership
Each jurisdiction has established guidance and recommendations relevant to all forms of teacher professional development. When possible, professional development opportunities for MWEEs should adhere to guidelines set forth by state and/or local education agencies. Outreach and training opportunities for school administrators will also help ensure jurisdictional alignment and increase high level support for both environmental education and continuing teacher professional development for teachers.

4. Other Considerations

4.1 Includes NOAA assets, including personnel and resources
NOAA has a wealth of applicable products, data, and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts who can enhance student and teacher experiences both in the

classroom and in the field. These resources complement the educator's strengths and augment the educational resources. Additionally, NOAA personnel can serve as important role models for career choices and stewardship. For applicants seeking to address the Climate Change special interest area, NOAA provides data, tools, and information to understand and prepare for climate variability and change. Many resources exist that can support teachers and students. For more on NOAA assets for education please see: www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections, NOAA in your state (www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/), and NOAA in your backyard (www.noaa.gov/education/noaa-in-your-backyard).

4.2 Ensures cultural relevance

The New England B-WET Program is strongly committed to expanding the participation of marginalized communities in MWEEs and ensuring that students' identities are reflected in those experiences. Programming should be designed to be culturally relevant and make authentic connections to students' lived experiences. Cultural relevance is defined as the ability to effectively reach and engage communities and their youth in a manner consistent with the cultural context and values of that community while effectively addressing disparities of diversity, equity, and inclusion within an organization's entire structure.

B. Program Priorities

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

Projects combining long-term, classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) through teacher professional development and student experiences. NOAA's New England B-WET program seeks proposals for projects that support high quality teacher professional development for classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). Projects must include the development of teacher-led student outdoor experiences, learning, and stewardship actions that connect students to their local watershed. These projects must address all aspects of the MWEE, as defined in Section I.A.b.

a. Teacher Professional Development

Professional development for teachers, coupled with MWEEs for students that are fully supported by their teachers in the classroom, will help concepts of watershed education be reinforced throughout the school year. Teachers should be trained to rely extensively on hands-on, inquiry-based experiential teaching and learning that allows students to draw on multiple disciplines and provides genuine, locally relevant sources of knowledge that can be used to help advance student learning skills across the entire school curriculum.

Projects should include more than 30 hours of professional development time for each

teacher, of which more than 10 hours should be spent doing hands-on inquiry or engaging in action projects outdoors. Professional development opportunities should allow for adequate instructional time, and create a structure for on-going teacher support and enrichment. Where states and/or school districts put limits on the amount of time teachers can spend in professional development, applicants should describe those limitations and how they will maximize the professional development time that is available. Projects should be designed so that teachers are capable of conducting MWEEs independently.

Professional development for teachers may include, but is not limited to, a combination of the following types of supported activities: workshops, college level courses, training for individuals who provide teacher professional development, individual teacher coaching and support (e.g., curriculum planning, shared teaching, demonstrations and/or other forms of in-school or in-field support), development of teacher networks, and/or online support (e.g., courses, webinars, discussion forums). Research suggests teachers are more likely to engage their students in activities they experience themselves during professional development programs. Therefore, MWEE professional development should always include opportunities for teachers to experience environmental action projects that connect to the watershed issue being studied, as well as the inquiry activities their students will take to plan and implement their own action projects.

Where appropriate, professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds. Resources exist to support the effective hands-on implementation of MWEEs and the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects that provide substantial benefit to both students and the school environment.

These guidelines are expected to support teacher training and increase the likelihood that teachers will successfully implement MWEEs in their classrooms. The long-term goal for the professional development is to empower teachers to continue MWEE implementation and stewardship action in their classrooms even after B-WET funding is exhausted.

b. Student Experiences
All applications should demonstrate a connection to the Gulf of Maine or Atlantic Ocean through a local watershed system so that students understand how their actions, even if inland, are connected to the health of the marine ecosystem. B-WET funded projects should include more than 5 hours of student activity time spent outdoors and incorporate at least one measurable stewardship action situated in places where students live, grow, and play. Student MWEEs led by the applicant and partners should serve as part of the teacher's professional development and training for how to successfully implement a MWEE.

c. Other Requirements
All applications submitted should also include the following elements:

1. A mechanism that encourages students, teachers, and project staff to share their experiences with peers, other students, and their community (e.g., newsletters, peer-to-peer presentations, conferences, community events, media/social media).
2. Inclusion of multiple partners. Partners may include (but are not limited to) non-profits, community organizations, schools, school departments, tribes, universities, etc. Partners should be actively involved in the project and submit a letter demonstrating the level of commitment and involvement with the application package. Demonstrate alignment with state or local learning standards and NOAA's Education Strategic plan (www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan)
3. Description of NOAA resources that will be used in support of the training or MWEEs such as data, places, or collaborations with NOAA entities as partners.

d. Special Interest Areas
Any application to this announcement must meet the Priority described in the previous section. New England B-WET also has three additional Special Interest Areas that applicants may wish to address if they choose. New England B-WET is very interested in projects that align with the following Special Interest Areas. Applicants are encouraged to address one or more of them as they capitalize on NOAA resources and issue areas that are a priority to the NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office. While applicants are not required to address a NOAA Special Interest Area, reviewers will consider these Special Interest Areas when scoring applications.
These areas are: New England Fisheries and Protected Species and Climate Science, Resilience, and Justice.

1. New England fisheries and protected species
The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office is an office under the NOAA Fisheries. We work with partners to ensure sustainable fishing opportunities, protection for endangered species and marine mammals NOAA is interested in B-WET projects that develop student understanding around the ecological, economic, or cultural importance of New England fisheries and protected species, including, but not limited to, groundfish, shellfish, sea turtles, Atlantic salmon, or marine mammals, and the habitats that support them.

2. Climate change science, resilience, and justice
The K-12 education system is a well-positioned venue for instilling comprehensive knowledge, skills, competencies, and resilience around one of the most pressing economic,

social and environmental issues of today: climate change. Education has the power to help students develop meaningful personal connections to climate solutions, a sense of personal agency and empowerment, and ultimately impact their behaviors and decision-making in relation to climate change (Kwauk, 2021; K12 Climate Action Commission, 2021). The MWEE framework can directly foster climate knowledge, skills, and competencies to address climate change, climate impacts, and the opportunities to contribute to climate solutions in their own communities. Applications incorporating this special interest area should demonstrate an understanding of age-appropriate, effective climate education communication strategies that will empower teachers and students to take individual, school-wide, and/or community action.

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 FY2023. 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.

The minimum Federal funding requested that may be requested is $50,000. $150,000 is the maximum Federal funding that may be requested for the entire two-year project. Applications requesting federal support from NOAA of more than the maximum will not be considered for review or funding. A recipient of a previous award seeking to continue an existing project beyond the approved award period must submit a new application and

compete with other applications.

Up to 50% of New England B-WET funding will be set aside for applicants that have not previously been funded by B-WET. Therefore, the total funding amount for applicants that have successfully received B-WET funding in the past may be limited to 50%.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to establish any specific partnership or to obligate available funds for partnership activities. There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA is not responsible for proposal preparation costs. Direct costs of application preparation shall not be included within the project application budget. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive funding.

Top ranked applications not funded in the current fiscal year may be considered for funding in the next fiscal year without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2023. The period of award must be 2 years (24 months). Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire award period. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. It is recommended to include the flexibility of the requested start date in your project description.

The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. Project start dates will be no earlier than August 1, 2023, dependent upon availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including National Environmental Policy Act analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

When a multi-year project is awarded, the scope of work and budget for all years is approved at the time of the award, but funding is usually provided only for the first year of the project with the remainder of the award subject to incremental funding, usually annually. NOAA anticipates continuing these multi-year awards for the entirety of their project periods; however, the agency has no obligation to provide an additional funding in connection with

the award beyond the initial funding increment.

Should adequate funding be available, NOAA reserves the right to make single-year awards (one allotment of funding) with an award period of up to 2 years if funding allows.

Applicants will be required to re-compete for continued funding after the initial two-year period of performance.

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. Additional information on Cooperative Agreements can be found in Chapter 5.C of the Department of Commerce (DoC) Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, which is currently available at: https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Grants%20%20Cooperative%20Agreements%20Manual%20%2820%20April%202021%29.pdf

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. However, for-profit and foreign organizations and foreign public entities may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner. Likewise, Federal agencies are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners and may contribute services in kind. Additional guidance on subrecipient partners can be found at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.331.

Applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, education projects must target teachers and/or students located in any part of the six New England States: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island or Connecticut.

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing or matching is NOT required. Cost sharing is voluntary and will not increase the chances of your project being selected. 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. If project costs are shared, NMFS must provide at least 50 percent of total project costs.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Potential applicants may contact NOAA’s Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (allison.rosner@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. Federal staff may provide letters confirming collaboration and commitment to the proposed work.

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants are required to apply online through Grants.gov. You may access the electronic grant application for the New England Bay Watershed Education and Training Program at www.grants.gov. Please note that applicants must locate the downloadable application package for this program by the Notice of Funding Opportunity number (found on the first page of this announcement) or CFDA number (11.008). Users of Grants.gov are

now required to use a new application process called Workspace. For more information regarding this platform, please visit: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive several automatic acknowledgments from Grants.gov including a receipt, validation of receipt, agency retrieval notice, and a Grants.gov tracking number. NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

If an applicant has problems downloading, please contact 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.
Applicants unable to effectively access application materials electronically, should contact Allison Rosner at the NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office by email at allison.rosner@noaa.gov or phone 978-282-8462.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposal should follow the content and format described below. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the New England B-WET, or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Additional resources for applicants can be found here: www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/apply.

a. Required Federal Forms
At the time of application submission, all applicants shall submit the following forms with signatures of the authorized representative of the submitting institution. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. 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. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.):
> Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424
> Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A
> Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: Form SF-424B
> Certifications Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
> Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable, see instructions on form)

b. Proposal Format
All pages should be single-spaced and should be composed in at least 11 point font with one inch margins on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper. The project description should not exceed 15 pages,

exclusive of project summary, literature cited, budget information, resumes of investigators, letters of commitment, National Environmental Policy Act questionnaire, and federal forms. Any attachment included in an electronic application should meet the above format requirement when printed out. All documents submitted as electronic application elements should be PDF (rather than MS Word, Excel, MOV, or other files types).

1. Project Summary (2 pages)
Your project summary should include the following information.
> PROJECT TITLE
> PROJECT DURATION: 2 year (24 month) project period starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month.
> ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS: Briefly describe your organization and list your key partners for this grant, if applicable. Partnerships are encouraged.
> SUMMARY: Provide a brief statement that explains the need for your project, how the need was identified, what the project goals are, and the specific objectives. Your summary should use plain language to provide reviewers with an understanding of the purpose and expected outcomes of your educational project, including total number of people directly engaged (administrators, partners, etc.) and estimated hours of engagement. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read this paragraph and grasp your plan. More information about NOAA assets and educational resources can be found at: www.education.noaa.gov/.
> DELIVERY METHOD: Explain how you will reach your audience, such as workshops, planning meetings, interactive programs, summer institutes, webinars, etc.
> AUDIENCE: Describe the demographics of your audience including the state or region(s) and the number and types of participants you expect to reach, such as school district administrators, environmental educators, principals, etc.
> BUDGET INFORMATION: Total federal funding requested each fiscal year; total non-federal match for each fiscal year. Total multi-year request and match (if applicable). Please list requested amounts in whole dollars. Match is not required for this funding opportunity and will not affect scoring.

2. Project Description (15-page limit)
The project description should describe and justify the project being proposed and address the elements of the evaluation criteria as described in section V.A. A high quality award description includes specificity regarding the purpose of the award in plain language, project goals and milestones, expected deliverables and outcomes, activities to be performed, and intended beneficiary or target audiences.

2.1 Goals, Objectives, and Need

The project description should include the goals, objectives, and purpose of the project. Include information about how the project contributes to greater understanding and stewardship of New England watersheds and human elements. Describe the need for your project and cite timely studies or sources, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project.

2.2 Target Audience

The project description should provide a discussion of the target audience(s) that will be served. Specifically, project descriptions should include a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served and the number of teachers and/or students to be reached each year of the proposed project. Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience, including anything that makes your target audience unique. Applicants should clearly state total anticipated contact time with the target audience, and indicate how much of this time will be spent outdoors. Applicants should indicate whether the project will reach marginalized communities, including minority communities, or their students; describe the demographics and vulnerabilities of their target audience(s), and use data to support these assertions.

2.3 Community-Based Partnerships that Lead with Equity

Unfortunately, many K-12 students (especially historically marginalized groups, particularly students of color and students from low-income families) do not currently have consistent access to adequately funded high-quality environmental experiences. The New England B-WET Program is strongly committed to expanding the participation of marginalized communities in watershed education and is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, including minority communities.

Applicants are encouraged to work with community-organizations that lead with equity (if the applicant is not one of these entities). In order to be effective, sustainable, and equitable, environmental education must be integrated within organizations that understand and support the needs of their community. The NOAA B-WET program is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, including minority communities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to develop meaningful and mutually-beneficial partnerships that honor the strengths of community organizations. In successful partnerships, organizations have shared goals and work together to share resources, communicate effectively, collaborate on decision-making, and competently engage members of diverse cultures and expertise. Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project.

Community partnerships may include, but are not limited to:
> Historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas
> Organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, including minority communities
> Partnerships that help to address a watershed challenge, problem, or phenomenon by bringing in local expertise on existing environmental issues and creating innovative solutions and/or incorporate traditional ecological knowledge
> Partnerships that enhance the local context, cultural relevance, and cultural competence in professional development for all teachers.

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

2.4 Methods
Project descriptions should include a timeline of expected deliverables, outcomes, and milestones and should describe how the planned activities will address the project goals and objectives. Timelines should be detailed enough for reviewers to ascertain the number and duration of teacher and student contacts. Project descriptions should outline the methods, activities to be performed, and approaches to be used to ensure the project implements each component of a MWEE (defined in section I.A.b.). Include specific approaches to achieving project objectives and expected outcomes. Projects under should include contact time with project participants with indication of how much of this time will be spent outdoors.

2.5 Outreach and Sharing
The project description should include significant external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages target audiences to share their experiences with peers and with the environmental education community. Applicants should describe how they will communicate and disseminate information from the project to ensure broader MWEE adoption and implementation. This could include conference presentations or strands, in-person or virtual convenings, sharing of white papers, or other media outreach about the project. Project-related materials should include the NOAA logo and cite B-WET as a funder.

2.6 Sustainability
Projects funded through B-WET should be developed with sustainability in mind, as future B-WET funding is not guaranteed. Applicants should discuss a plan for sustainability of the project beyond NOAA funding. Applicants should develop plans for sustaining networks and

partnerships and identify future funds needed to carry out next steps toward integrating MWEEs into district or statewide curriculum and building teacher capacity e. List other sources of funding that have been sought for the project and the status of those requests, or potential funding opportunities that will be explored after B-WET funding has closed.

2.7 Evaluation
Project-level Evaluations:
For all priorities, project descriptions should also identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities via a description of the project-level evaluation. Up to 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal.

For this funding opportunity, project-level evaluation is defined as the systematic collection and documentation of information about your project's short- term outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting project objectives, and inform decisions about future programming. It informs those who design, manage, and implement the project to make refinements and introduce improvements into future efforts.

Project-level evaluations should be rigorous and well planned, with a clear articulation of how the evaluation results will be used (e.g. what questions will they answer). They should be appropriate for the kind of project proposed, the capacity of the applicant, and the size of project (e.g. new startup project vs. long standing program, new applicant vs. repeat applicant). They may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include, for example, evaluation tools and surveys, observation, or outside consultation. They should result in not only data, but interpretations of the data.

Proposals should provide a project-level evaluation plan for 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. The evaluation plan should include:
> How will the evaluation be used and what do you hope to gain (e.g. information to determine the success of the project; information on how to improve the project's effectiveness.)
> What will be evaluated (e.g. changes in participants’ knowledge or attitudes related to watersheds)
> The type(s) of evaluation that is planned (e.g. needs assessment, formative evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, etc.)
> The methods for implementing the evaluation (e.g. what will be measured, how it will be measured, when will evaluation data be gathered, and how will results be analyzed and delivered?)

Resources for Project evaluation:
> B-WET Evaluation resources: www.noaa.gov/officeeducation/bwet/resources/mwee-resources
> The “Evaluate” section of the Chesapeake Bay MWEE Guide: www.baybackpack.com/mwee/step-3-evaluate
> California B-WET Project Evaluation Guidance: http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html

National B-WET Evaluation:
In the past, B-WET has collected data on B-WET program grantee and participant activities and outcomes through its national evaluation system, above and beyond project-level evaluation work conducted by grantees. However, we are currently analyzing existing evaluation data and will enhance our evaluation approach based upon that analysis. Therefore, we are not currently collecting data via the B-WET National Evaluation System. Grantees may be invited to participate in future data collection activities and will be given advance notice about these opportunities so they can incorporate data collection into project and implementation plans, as appropriate. Additional information about B-WET national evaluation work is available here: www.noaa.gov/officeeducation/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation.

3. Appendices (not included in the Project description 15-page count)

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

3.2 Letters of Commitment and Partnership descriptions
Letters of commitment from each partner that is making a significant contribution to the project should be included with the application.

Proposals should include partnerships with school divisions, the state department of education, or capacity building network partners (if the applicant is not one of these entities). Applicants should describe the nature and makeup of the proposed community-based partners (if the applicant is not one themselves), including the partners’ expertise in competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming. See definition of community-based partnerships in Section IV,B,b,2,2.3 Community-Based Partnerships that Lead with Equity.

3.3 Technical Experience, Qualifications, and Resumes
Applicants should provide a description of the applicant's ability to successfully implement and manage the proposed project including staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project, and your organizational experience and past history in performing tasks similar to the proposed project. Also include a paragraph describing qualifications of each of the key personnel and partner conducting the project, including justification for how the project team members possess the educational, scientific, and cultural expertise needed to carry out the project. Provide resumes for the key personnel conducting the project (limit two pages per resume). Technical experience, qualifications, and resumes do not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit.

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

3.5. NEPA
NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Consequently, if your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at the following link (www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf) and include it as an appendix to your application.

Please see section VI.B.f. for information the NEPA section of the application. The NEPA responses do not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit.

3.6. Budget and Budget Justification
In addition to the SF-424A Budget Information form, applicants should include a detailed budget justification, or budget narrative. Please list requested amounts in whole dollars. Applicants are encouraged to use the B-WET budget template found at www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/noaa-new-england-bay-watershed-education-and-training-new-england-b-wet-program. All budget information submitted with the application should mirror the dollar amounts on required SF-424 and SF-424A forms. The budget documentation does not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit.

The budget justification should explain the need for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested in relation to the project description. All proposed costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary to the supported activity. To ensure equitable participation by community members, applicants are encouraged to include participant support costs (e.g., direct financial compensation, covering travel expenses and meals, providing lodging).

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs, which are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 C.F.R. 200.1 and 200.412-.415 at http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4. An applicant may also propose all allowable project charges as direct costs. An applicant requesting indirect costs should provide a current approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement established with its cognizant Federal agency or an acknowledgement letter from the cognizant agency to which the applicant has submitted a proposed rate. If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer NOAA Grants Management Division 1325 East West Highway 9th Floor Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ . Applicants are required to use the Universal Identifier and System for Award Management as identified in Office of Management and Budget guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, found at https://go.usa.gov/xX5CU . Guidance on obtaining a Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov may be found at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the 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 (UEI) in its application ; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an 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 UEI 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 use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Electronic Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on February 15, 2023 to be considered for funding. Applications received after the deadline will be withdrawn without further consideration.

Applicants are required to apply online through Grants.gov. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov. See Section IV.G. for more information.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (E.O) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs". Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC), established as a result of E.O. 12372.

F. Funding Restrictions

The New England B-WET Program should not be considered a long-term source of funds. Funding may not be used to support endowments, individuals, building campaigns or capital construction, deficit financing, annual giving, or fundraising.

B-WET cannot fund projects with the primary purpose of construction. This includes the construction of new buildings, completion of shell space in existing buildings, renovation or rehabilitation of existing buildings, and construction or development of real property infrastructure improvements (e.g., site preparation, utilities, streets, curbs, sidewalks, parking lots, other streetscaping improvements, etc.). Alteration activities in support of an education project, such as the renovation of an educational exhibit or installation of a schoolyard

garden space, would likely not be considered construction.

The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award (including any approved no-cost extensions), and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost-share or matching contribution. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Requirements), found at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are necessary and reasonable.

G. Other Submission Requirements

a. Registration Process

1. Required registrations
You must complete and maintain the following free registrations to be eligible to submit an application using the Grants.Gov website. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. Registration can take between 3 days to 4 weeks or more, so applicants should begin the registration process as early as possible.

(a) Grants.Gov
The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a one time registration process.

(b) System for Award Management (SAM)
All Applicant Organizations must complete and maintain an active registration. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days. The renewal process may require as much time as the initial registration. To register, go to: www.SAM.gov. Applicants are required to use the Universal Identifier and System for Award Management as identified in Office of Management and Budget guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, found at https://go.usa.gov/xX5CU . Guidance on obtaining a Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov may be found at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/.

You must renew and revalidate your entity’s registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration in SAM - and sooner, if your entity’s information changes. The primary point of contact's email address will receive a message alerting them to the entity’s renewal requirements at 60 days, 30 days and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration, it will expire. You must have an active SAM registration in order to be eligible to receive contract awards or payments, submit assistance award applications via Grants.gov, or receive certain payments from some federal government agencies.

2. Authorizations and Credentials
Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan your time accordingly to avoid late submissions, as such submissions will be rejected. The Grants.gov validation process for a submitted application can take up to two business days to complete (following submission through Grants.gov). Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, it is strongly recommended that a final and complete application be submitted at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA.) Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by FOUR automated responses (1-Grants.gov Submission Receipt; 2-Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application; 3-Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application; 4-Grants.gov Agency Tracking Number Assignment for Application). You should save and print the proof of submission. If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support number.

3. System Issues
If you experience a Grants.gov “system issue” (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before and applicable funding cycle deadline, please (1) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization’s computer system or equipment are not considered “systems issues.” Similarly, an applicant's failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered Authorized Organization Representative submits the application,

or (iii) receive an email from Grants.gov are not considered system issues. A Grants.gov "systems issue" is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed "systems issue," NOAA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov at the time of application submission that are beyond the control of the applicant.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

a. Evaluation criteria for projects combining long-term, classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) through teacher professional development and student experiences.

1. Importance, relevance, and applicability of proposal to the program goals (20 points)
This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the NOAA New England B-WET program, this may include the following questions:

1.1. Project Need (5 points)
Does the applicant demonstrate a need for the project?

1.2. Likelihood to Succeed (5 points)
What is the likelihood of the proposed educational and environmental activities to improve the general understanding and stewardship of the environment?

1.3. Local Context (5 points)
Does the experience use the local context for learning and focus around questions, problems, or issues pertaining to the New England region including its local population, geography, culture, and natural, financial, and human resources?

1.4. Connection to Watershed (5 points)
Does the project make a direct connection to the greater marine or estuarine environment and watershed system; and does it address how actions within that system can affect the environment?

2. Technical Merit (45 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the NOAA New England B-WET program, this may include the following questions:

2.1. Objectives, Milestones, and Timeline (4 points)
Are goals and objectives identified in the proposal? Are they focused on reaching the stated outcome(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives and outcomes can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the applicant include project milestones and a timeline for reaching each?

2.2. Target Audience (5 points)
Does the applicant define the audience(s) that will be reached including their demographics and location? Are the targeted communities historically marginalized groups, students of color, students from low-income families, or those that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts? Does the applicant include data to justify and support their description of the targeted communities? Does the applicant define the targeted community's needs and limitations?

2.3. Best Practices per the Elements of the MWEE (14 points)
Does it implement the best practices of BOTH the Teacher Professional Development for MWEEs and MWEEs for their Students? Does the project demonstrate at least 30 hours of professional development for teachers that increases teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues, models the MWEE framework, allows for adequate instructional time, provides ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives, and meets jurisdictional guidelines? Is the teacher professional development coupled with MWEEs for students that includes a defined local issue, at least 5 hours of student activity time spent outdoors, analyzed and evaluated results of investigations, adequate teacher participation in the student MWEE, a description of how the project is an integral part of the classroom or instructional program, connections to the local community and environment, and experiences that are a set of activities over time?

2.4. Environmental Action Projects (6 points)
Does the project guide students in identifying and implementing an environmental action project as a solution that directly addresses the defined issue or phenomenon they are investigating as is described in Section I, A, b, 1, 1.4? Or, does the project provide guidance for teachers to prepare them to offer their students environmental action projects?

2.5. Alignment with National, State, and Regional Standards and Priorities (3 points)
Does the applicant demonstrate how their project is aligned and supports the goals and

strategies of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan (www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaaeducation-strategic-plan)? Is the project aligned with environmental literacy principles (e.g. Ocean Literacy, www.coexploration.org/oceanliteracy/documents/OceanLitChart.pdf or Climate Literacy, http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/climate_literacy.pdf) where appropriate? Does the applicant demonstrate how their project is aligned to state learning standards?

2.6. NOAA Assets (2 points)
Does the project use NOAA and partner assets including products, data, services, or scientific/professional experts?

2.7. Evaluation (4 points)
Does the applicant provide an effective project-level evaluation plan, appropriate to the maturity and scale of the project, to determine the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting the objectives, and inform decisions about future programming? Does the plan describe how the evaluation will be used? Does the plan define what will be evaluated and the types of evaluation planned? Are the methods for implementing the evaluation appropriate?

2.8. Special Interest Areas (4 points)
Does the applicant address one or more of the stated Special Interest Areas (New England fisheries and protected species, and/or climate change science, resilience, and justice) defined in section I.B.d.

2.9. Sustainability Plan (3 points)
Does the applicant discuss a plan for sustainability of the project beyond NOAA funding (e.g. plans for sustaining networks and partnerships, identification of future funds to facilitate the integration of MWEEs into school curriculum at a school/district/statewide level)? Does the applicant list other sources of funding that have been sought for the project and the status of those requests?

3. Overall Qualification of Applicant (10 points)
This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the NOAA New England B-WET program, this may include the following questions:

3.1. Knowledge of K-12 Landscape (3 points)
Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar K-

12 projects? Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the Content Standards for their state? Does the applicant document collaborations with schools or school systems (if they are not one such organization)?

3.2. Knowledge of Local Watershed (2 points)
Does the applicant show prior experience in working in the New England region, show prior experience with New England regional issues, or demonstrate partnerships with local organizations in the New England region on proposed projects? Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of watershed issues? Does the applicant partner with content experts, if needed, for program implementation?

3.3. Partners (5 points)
Does the applicant describe the nature and makeup of the proposed partners and relate each partners' expertise to the objectives or elements of the proposed project? Did all partners needed to execute the proposed project (e.g. watershed subject matter experts, curriculum supervisors or science, social studies, and other relevant subject coordinators at the school districts, etc.) provide letters of commitment? Are community-based partners, as described in section IV, B, b, 2, 2.3, included? Does the applicant describe how the partners' expertise and membership position them to ensure equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities? Does the applicant describe their partners' qualifications and experience related to competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming?

4. Project Costs (20 points)
This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the NOAA New England B-WET program, this may include the following questions:

4.1. Reasonable (10 points)
Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request and is the budget request reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represent a good return on investment? Is the proposed budget suitable to the geographic area? Are partners adequately compensated for their expertise and contribution to the project?

4.2. Direct Programming (10 points)
Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students and teachers in contact with the environment? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for

those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the project?

5. Outreach and Education (5 points)
This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the NOAA New England B-WET program, this may include the following questions:

5.1. Outreach (3 points)
Does the proposal describe opportunities for outreach and education around the value of MWEEs and environmental education at events that engage school boards, public officials, parents, community organizations, other schools, or the media? Does the project have plans for supporting target audiences in sharing their conclusions and watershed protection knowledge with a broad audience? Is a commitment made to acknowledge NOAA B-WET as the funder?

5.2. Peer-to-Peer Sharing (2 points)
Does the proposal describe opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing for teachers, educators, and school administrators?

B. Review and Selection Process

a. Initial Evaluation of the Application
Once a full application has been received, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with published requirements. If applications do not comply, they will be declined without further review. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified.

Applications responsive to this solicitation will be evaluated by a two-part review process; a technical review and a panel review. Both phases will be conducted by the same set of private and/or public sector expert reviewers. Each review phase is described in detail below.

b. Technical review
After the initial screening, independent written technical evaluations from three or more appropriate Federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise will be obtained to determine the technical merit of the proposal. Their evaluation will be based solely on the information included in the application, based on the criteria described in Section V.A, Evaluation Criteria. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. No consensus advice will be given. These reviewers will be required to certify they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will

protect technical reviewer identity to the maximum extent permitted by law. Following completion of the technical review, the individual technical review scores will be averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order by their final technical scores.

c. Panel Review
A panel review meeting will be held following the technical review process. The purpose of the panel meeting is to discuss the proposals in-depth and to get final scores from reviewers. This in-depth discussion may raise issues or answer questions that a reviewer did not have in the technical review, or it may clarify an issue. After discussing proposals, panelists will provide comments and individual final scores for each application, which will be averaged to produce a final rank order. If one or more non-Federal reviewers is used, no consensus advice will be given by the panel.

d. Funding Recommendations
The Federal Program Officer will review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel and make recommendations to the Selecting Official. The rank order from the review panel will be the primary consideration for the Selection Official in deciding which of the new proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the Selection Factors described in Section V.C. of this Announcement. 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 without re-competition, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant and NOAA officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA’s efforts to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as described in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, and other legislation.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award.

Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.208. NOAA also 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. In addition, NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management requirements referenced in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, 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 use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

C. Selection Factors

The New England B-WET panel ratings will be provided in rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the following factors:
a. Availability of funding;
b. Balance/distribution of funds:
> Geographically
> By type of institutions
> By type of partners
> By project types
c. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal Agencies;
d. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in section I.A. and I.B.;
e. Applicant's prior award performance;
g. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, successful applications are usually recommended within 240 days from the date of publication of this notice. The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2023.

The exact amount of funds awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project are determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and the NOAA Program Office. Recipients must not initiate projects until an approved award is received from the NOAA Grants Office.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

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. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement

with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff. Awards are not necessarily made to the highest ranked applications.

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been approved for funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division with the issuance of an award signed by a NOAA Grants Officer. This is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, which the NOAA Grants Officer will typically issue electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the authorized representative identified by the applicant on the SF-424, typically via an email from Grants Online, and the principal investigator may receive a copy. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification from the Program Office indicating that their proposals were not recommended for funding and including technical reviewers' comments.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS. Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which applies to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

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

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

REVIEW OF RISK. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information

included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA). In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words “Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use”; at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY APPLICABLE TO FINANCIAL 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: www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities_assault_policy.html.

REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States–this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated

into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project. WAIVERS. When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOC may grant, a waiver from these requirements. DOC will notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. 1) When DOC has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which DOC determines that: a. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; b. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or c. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. DOC will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at https://whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america . DEFINITIONS. “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives —that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinyl chloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference’’ means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. ‘‘Project’’ means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. -- 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding

agents or additives. 2 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

C. Reporting

a. Financial Reports. All financial reports shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants Online system https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov.

b. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at https://www.fsrs.gov/ on all sub-awards over $30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

c. Performance Reports. Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Electronic submission of performance reports is required through the NOAA Grants Online system, https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. The semi-annual reports must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. A final comprehensive report is due at the end of the award period. The final comprehensive report shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants Online. It is recommended that recipients follow the progress report format provided in the following link: www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/grantee-resources.

The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA NEW England B-WET or NOAA B-WET website along with the PowerPoint presentation, or similar presentation software, introducing the project, the Project Abstract, Summary of Potential Benefits and the Principal Investigator, including the Principal Investigator email contact information.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the NOAA Fisheries New England B-WET website at: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/noaa-new-england-bay-watershed-education-and-training-new-england-b-wet-program or contact Allison Rosner, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region; 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester MA, 01930, or by phone at 978-282-8462 or email: allison.rosner@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal

funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any proposal preparation costs. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

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