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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Office of the Under Secretary (USEC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Strengthening the Public's and/or K-12 Students' Environmental Literacy for Community Resilience

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-SEC-OED-2016-2004737

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

Dates: The deadline for applications is 11:59:59 pm EST on February 8, 2016. Note that NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM EST.) Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted. Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system and with SAM.gov prior to submitting an application. These registration processes can take several weeks and involve multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Applications submitted through Grants.gov are automatically date/time stamped when they are validated and submitted to the Agency. PLEASE NOTE: When submitting through Grants.gov, you will receive 2 emails. An initial email will be sent to confirm your attempt to submit an application. This is NOT a confirmation of acceptance of your application. It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application and send you a second email. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.
PLEASE ALSO NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html.

Two informational teleconferences with the program officers will occur on Thursday, December 10, 2015 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EST and Tuesday, January 5, 2016 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EST. Interested applicants may obtain the phone number and related teleconference information by visiting http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding. Whenever possible, individuals from the same institution should try to join the teleconference from the same phone line.

Funding Opportunity Description: The goal of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is to

strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience to extreme weather events and other environmental hazards. Many U.S. communities are contending with issues related to preventing, withstanding, and recovering from disruptions caused by environmental threats and vulnerabilities (U.S. Department of Commerce FY2014-FY2018 Strategic Plan). These threats and vulnerabilities include but are not limited to severe storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, heavy precipitation events, persistent drought, heat waves, increased global temperatures, acidification of the ocean, and sea level rise (Weather-ready Nation: NOAA's National Weather Service Strategic Plan 2011; The Third National Climate Assessment, 2014). Preparing for and responding effectively to present and future environmental challenges enhances the resilience of communities.

Projects should build the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness and an understanding of Earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location. In order for communities to become more resilient, their members must have the ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically. Projects will be based on the established scientific evidence about current and future natural hazards and stresses facing communities and consider socio-economic and ecological factors. Projects should also (1) leverage and incorporate relevant state and local hazard mitigation and/or adaptation plans and (2) collaborate with institutions that are involved in efforts to develop or implement those plans. Projects may focus on a single type of environmental hazard or a range of hazards that may impact a community or communities. NOAA will consider funding a wide range of project types, but all projects must actively engage participants in learning and addressing real-world issues. In addition, projects must utilize NOAA's vast scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. In order to facilitate the use of NOAA's assets, projects are strongly encouraged to partner with relevant NOAA entities (offices, programs, etc.) and/or NOAA employees and affiliates. NOAA's education website (www.education.noaa.gov) and an additional list of relevant assets (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/resilience_assets.html) provide links to NOAA datasets, potential NOAA partners, and other resilience-related assets from federal and non-federal organizations.

Projects must be implemented within the United States and its territories. They may be implemented on local to regional scales. Project topics must relate to NOAA's mission in the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate sciences and stewardship and should focus on one or more of the goals of NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan

(http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/goals/): healthy oceans; weather-ready nation; climate adaptation and mitigation; and resilient coastal communities and economies.

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to institutions of higher education; other nonprofits, including informal education institutions such as museums, zoos, and aquariums; K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; and state, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States. For-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply.

Proposed projects must be between 2 and 5 years in duration and have total federal requests of $250,000 to $500,000 for all years of the project. It is anticipated that awards funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will be made by September 30, 2016 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2016. Note: Links to helpful information for applying to this opportunity are available at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

1. Overview

The NOAA Office of Education’s Environmental Literacy Grants (ELG) support projects that inform, educate, and inspire a diverse pool of educators, students and the public to use Earth systems science toward both improving ocean and coastal stewardship and increasing safety and resilience to environmental hazards (NOAA's Education Strategic Plan, 2015-2035). These grants support formal and informal education activities at local, regional, and national levels to address NOAA’s mission of science, service, and stewardship. This mission is directed toward a vision of the future where communities and their ecosystems are healthy and resilient in the face of sudden or prolonged change. A vision of resilient communities guides NOAA and its partners in a collective effort to reduce the vulnerability of communities and ecological systems in the short-term, while helping society avoid or adapt to potential long-term environmental, social, and economic changes. To achieve this vision NOAA strives to understand current Earth system conditions, project future changes, and help people make informed decisions that reduce their vulnerability to environmental hazards and stresses that emerge over time, while at the same time increase their ability to cope with them (NOAA’s Next Generation Strategic Plan, 2010). To make the best social, economic, and environmental decisions, individuals should have the ability to understand scientific processes, consider uncertainty, and reason about the ways that human and natural systems interact (NOAA's Education Strategic Plan, 2015-2035). Therefore, education plays a critical role in achieving NOAA’s mission and vision.

Many U.S. communities are contending with issues related to preventing, withstanding, and recovering from disruptions caused by environmental threats and vulnerabilities (U.S. Department of Commerce FY2014-FY2018 Strategic Plan). These threats and vulnerabilities include but are not limited to severe storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, heavy precipitation events, persistent drought, heat waves, increased global temperatures, acidification of the ocean, and sea level rise (Weather-ready Nation: NOAA’s National Weather Service Strategic Plan 2011; The Third National Climate Assessment, 2014). Preparing for and responding effectively to present and future environmental challenges enhances the resilience of communities. A recent report from the National Academies states that, “[to] create a culture of resilience, public education and communication are important to help shift the way that Americans perceive themselves in relation to disasters and ensure that the lessons learned from our history with disasters stay active in the public’s

consciousness." (National Academies, 2012, p. 136). Strengthening connections between community resilience initiatives and education efforts is key to ensuring that local communities make informed decisions to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant environmental hazards and stresses, with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment (The Third National Climate Assessment, 2014). Building these connections will be the emphasis of the Environmental Literacy Grants for the next several years.

The goal of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is to strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience to extreme weather events and other environmental hazards.

2. Description of Project Activities

Projects should build the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness and an understanding of Earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location. In order for communities to become more resilient, their members must have the ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically. Projects will be firmly based on the established scientific evidence about current and future natural hazards and stresses facing communities and consider socio-economic and ecological factors. Projects should also (1) leverage and incorporate relevant state and local hazard mitigation and/or adaptation plans and (2) collaborate with institutions that are involved in efforts to develop or implement those plans. Projects may focus on a single type of environmental hazard or a range of hazards that may impact a community or communities. NOAA will consider funding a wide range of project types, but all projects must actively engage participants in learning and addressing real-world issues. In addition, projects must utilize NOAA's vast scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. In order to facilitate the use of NOAA's assets, projects are strongly encouraged to partner with relevant NOAA entities (offices, programs, etc.) and/or NOAA employees and affiliates. NOAA's education website (www.education.noaa.gov) and an additional list of relevant assets (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/resilience_assets.html) provide links to NOAA datasets, potential NOAA partners, and other resilience-related assets from federal and non-federal organizations.

Project topics must relate to NOAA's mission in at least one of the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate sciences and stewardship and should focus on one or more of the goals of NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/goals/): healthy oceans; weather-ready nation; climate adaptation and mitigation; and resilient coastal communities and economies.

Projects must be implemented within the United States and its territories. They may be implemented on local to regional scales. The project description should include a justification of the proposed geographic scale of a project and discussion of the project components that might be applicable to projects in other places.

Applications that propose the expansion or enhancement of a previously funded project that meets the requirements of this funding opportunity are eligible. However, the applicants must explicitly demonstrate the significant accomplishments of the previous award and how the proposed project will significantly improve, and/or build on the previous award.

Also, projects should consider engaging with local community foundations on resilience projects. Community foundations often serve as conveners for local and diverse stakeholders issues. You may find this community foundation locator useful: http://www.cof.org/community-foundation-locator.

NOAA offers other funding opportunities for resilience projects through the Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants (http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/coastalresiliency.html) and the Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program (https://coast.noaa.gov/resilience-grant/). Please consult the guidelines for these competitions as your project may be better aligned to these funding opportunities.

3. Target Audiences

The target audiences for this funding opportunity are: the broader public, K-12 students, and may also include informal educators (including interpreters and docents) and formal educators (pre- or in-service, and including school administrators). Higher education students and professionals working in the area of community resilience are not a target audience for this funding opportunity. Projects focused on engaging public audiences should involve individuals who represent multiple sectors of society.

There is an interest in projects that reach groups from under-served communities, which are often the most vulnerable to the risks associated with extreme weather events and

environmental change (Kersten et al., 2012).

4. Project Evaluation

Project descriptions should include robust evaluation plans. Evaluation plans should include measurement of the project's progress towards meeting the project goals and objectives as well as the goal of this funding program. Plans for formative and summative project evaluations should be well constructed and should use best practices for evaluating the type of project. Discussion of both formative and summative evaluations should be included in the project description and in the budget section. Project evaluation should include assessment of changes in the target audiences' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors as a result of the activities undertaken. The impact of the proposed project on the target audiences must be measurable during the award period. Particularly when dealing with vulnerable populations, the evaluation should reflect practices of cultural competence (http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=92). Potential impacts of the project beyond the award period should be described. During the award period, reports of both outputs and outcomes for a project will be expected. Projects should be based on an existing front-end evaluation/needs assessment and there should be a description of that needs assessment in the project description. Applicants are encouraged to provide a logic model or theory of change for their proposed project.

Project evaluation should be handled by external professional evaluators or by internal staff who have significant experience with each type of evaluation and are not otherwise substantively involved with the project. Applicants should include funding for project evaluation in their budgets. While the costs for project evaluation may vary considerably, 10 to 20 percent of the total budget is a reasonable estimate of costs associated with a comprehensive project evaluation.

To further inform the broad fields of K-12 and informal science education about what was learned from the project, applicants are encouraged to develop appropriate project dissemination strategies. Project teams are encouraged to engage their peers in active discussion of relevant best practices. This may or may not be best accomplished by attending and presenting at annual meetings of professional societies. Principal Investigators (PIs) must provide summative project evaluation reports to NOAA. If applicable, PIs may also post evaluation reports to www.informalscience.org and include any resulting instructional products and materials in the National Science Digital Library (NSDL) Science and Math Informal Learning Educators (SMILE) Pathway (www.howtosmile.org).

5. Awards Dates and Mission Goal

NOAA anticipates that awards funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will be made by September 30, 2016 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2016. Note: Links to helpful information for applying to this announcement is available at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding.
This FFO meets NOAA's four Mission Goals: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation, Weather-Ready Nation, Healthy Oceans, and Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies (www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/goals/).

6. Definitions

Environmental Data: Environmental data are defined as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data, such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Data and information collected as part of the project evaluation are not considered environmental data and information.

NOAA Assets: Resources, services, or sites that are used to support NOAA's mission and to communicate NOAA research, data, information, and knowledge to the public. These include education materials and programs, datasets and visualizations, subject matter experts, facilities, and managed natural resource areas. A partial listing of NOAA assets can be found at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/resilience_assets.html. A summary of NOAA programs and activities sorted by the state or territory in which they are based or focused is available at: www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/. A summary of NOAA resources in various regions of the country is available at: www.education.noaa.gov/Special_Topics/NOAA_in_Your_Backyard.html. NOAA assets incorporated into education materials can be found at www.education.noaa.gov.

Outcomes: The changes that show movement toward achieving ultimate goals and objectives - e.g., the number of persons who, as a result of their participation in a project, demonstrate changes in: awareness and knowledge of specific concepts and/or issues; interest in and/or attitudes toward certain issues, careers, or courses of action; and behavior or skills. Outcomes may be changes that occur in the short term (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations); medium term (e.g., practices and behaviors); or long term (e.g., social,

economic, and environmental conditions). (Source: adapted from the Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education Projects (p.35, http://informalscience.org/documents/Eval_Framework.pdf).)

Outputs: The immediate results of an action (e.g., services, events, and products) that document the extent of implementation of a particular activity. They are typically expressed numerically - e.g., the number of educators involved in a capacity-building project or the number of professional development workshops held. (Source: adapted from the Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education Projects (p.35, http://informalscience.org/documents/Eval_Framework.pdf).)

Resilience: The capacity of a community, business, or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption. (U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 2014, http://toolkit.climate.gov/get-started/overview)

7. References

American Evaluation Association. (2011). Public Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation. Fairhaven, MA: Author. URL: http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=92.

Friedman, A. (Ed.). (2008). Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education Projects. URL: http://informalscience.org/documents/Eval_Framework.pdf.

Kersten, E., Morello-Frosch, R., Pastor, M., Ramos, M., 2012. Facing the Climate Gap: How Environmental Justice Communities Are Leading the Way to a More Sustainable and Equitable California. Program for Environmental and Regional Equity. University of Southern California. URL: http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/facingtheclimategap/

Melillo, Jerry M., Terese (T.C.) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohe, Eds., 2014: Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment. U.S. Global Change Research Program. URL: http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/

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National Research Council. (2012). A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. Committee on a Conceptual Framework for New K-12 Science Education Standards. Board on Science Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

National Research Council. (2012). Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

U.S. Department of Commerce. (2014). FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. URL: https://www.commerce.gov/sites/commerce.gov/files/media/files/2014/doc_fy2014-2018_strategic_plan.pdf.

B. Program Priorities

Refer to I.A., Program Objective. There are no other program priorities.

C. Program Authority

Authority for this program is provided by the following: 33 USC 893a, as amended by the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Reauthorization Act of 2010 ("America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010"), Pub. L. 111-358, § 302.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates the availability of approximately $2,000,000 of total Federal financial assistance in FY 2016 for this solicitation. Approximately 4 to 8 projects will be funded in the form of cooperative agreements in FY 2016. NOAA reserves the right to hold over a subset of applications that do not receive funding in FY 2016 for consideration in FY 2017. During the next few years of Environmental Literacy Grant competitions, NOAA's Office of Education plans to focus on building the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience.

Proposed projects must be between 2 and 5 years in duration and have total federal requests of $250,000 to $500,000 for all years of the project. It is anticipated that awards funded under this announcement this fiscal year will be made by September 30, 2016 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2016.

The total Federal amount requested from NOAA for each project must be no less than $250,000 and no more than $500,000 for all years of the project, including direct and indirect costs. Any project requesting total Federal support from NOAA of less than $250,000 or more than $500,000 total for all years will not be considered for funding.

The combined total budget request should not include any funding that would support NOAA partners in the project, including the personnel involved and the activities and tasks that they will undertake. Any costs associated with these activities that go beyond in-kind support will be handled internally by the Office of Education; these costs may not exceed 10% of the total federal request for the proposed project. See Section IV.B.1(f) for details regarding how to document potential NOAA costs.

The amount of funding available through this announcement will be dependent upon final FY 2016 and FY 2017 budgetary decisions. Publication of this notice does not obligate DOC/NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement from an authorized NOAA Grants Officer, the applicant does so solely at his/her own risk of such costs not being included under the award. Pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless approved by the NOAA Grants Officer in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.308(d) and 200.458. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives.

Applications to renew or supplement existing awards will not be accepted. Multi-year funding may be considered for programs or long-term awards where funding for the subsequent year(s) is anticipated but not provided at the time the initial award is approved

and where the estimated budget for future funding periods can be forecast with some degree of reliability.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications must cover a project period of two to five years to be eligible for merit review. Start dates can be October 1, 2016 or later. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through cooperative agreements under the terms of this notice. Applications funded through cooperative agreements will include substantial involvement of the Federal government which may include, but is not limited to, liaison activities between the grantee and NOAA personnel who are contributing data or expertise to the project.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to institutions of higher education; other nonprofits, including informal education institutions such as museums, zoos, and aquariums; K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; and state, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States. For-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply.

There are no eligibility restrictions on institutions that are serving as project partners but are not submitting an application. These partners can receive a portion of the funding through sub-awards or, for NOAA partners, through direct support from the Office of Education. Note: Although NOAA programs and offices can receive a small amount of support from the Office of Education to facilitate their involvement with the project, the principal benefit of the project cannot be to support NOAA (see Section II.A. and Section IV.B.1(f)).

It is strongly encouraged that an individual serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) on only one application submitted to this funding opportunity. Institutions may submit more than one distinct application and individuals may serve as co-PIs or key personnel on more than one application. Federal employees may not serve as PIs or co-PIs on any application, although they may be included as key personnel.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no cost share requirement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Eligibility See sections IV. B. and D. below.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks and involves multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their System for Award Management (SAM) registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration [CCR]) may need to be renewed or updated prior to submitting to Grants.gov. (Note that your CCR username will not work in SAM; you must create a new SAM User Account to renew or update your registration.) 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 accordingly to avoid late submissions. For further information please visit the SAM web portal (https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/).

Each applicant must be registered in Grants.gov. If any applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov or uploading the application into the Grants.gov system, they should contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

PLEASE NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html.

B. Content and Form of Application

Each applicant must submit an application through Grants.gov. Failure of an applicant to submit an application before the deadline will result in the project not being merit reviewed or receiving any additional consideration. See the Office of Education's frequently asked questions site: www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/faq_page.html for additional guidance during the preparation of applications.

Collaborative applications will not be funded through this announcement; rather projects will be supported through a single award to an institution that may include sub-awards to project partners.

1. Format Requirements

The page margin on standard letter-size paper should be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right. All pages should be numbered. The typeface should be standard 11-point size or larger and must be clear and easily legible. Color or high-resolution graphics, unusually sized materials, or otherwise unusual materials submitted as part of the application are allowed, but should be employed only when necessary for adequate description of the proposed project. All narrative sections of the application should be single spaced and consist of the elements described in Section IV.B.1. Do not submit scanned documents, other than letters of commitment.

2. Content Requirements

An application must include all elements (a) through (i) below; elements (j) and (k) are optional. Failure to provide this information in the required form and within prescribed page limits will result in the application being excluded from further review. Any non-requested elements submitted as part of an application package will be removed from the application prior to merit review.
As there are many required elements of an application, it is recommended that you develop and use an application checklist of your own or the one we provide on our templates page (www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html).

(a) Required Forms. At the time of application submission, applicants must submit the following forms with signatures of the Authorized Representative of the submitting institution. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.):
(i) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
(ii) SF-424-A, Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs
(iii) SF-424-B, Assurances, Non-Construction Programs
(iv) CD-511, Certifications Regarding Lobbying
(v) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable; see instructions on form); only the versions of these forms available in Grants.gov are acceptable.

(b) Title Page. Please use the title page template available at

www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html. Whether or not the title page template is used, a title page must be submitted and contain all of the following elements:

(i) the funding opportunity name and number to which you are applying;

(ii) the project's title;

(iii) the Principal Investigator (PI) and co-PI names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers. The PI listed on the title page should be affiliated with the institution submitting the application;

(iv) the proposed start and end dates for the project;

(v) the requested funding amount;

(vi) the title page should also contain an executive summary of the project that does not exceed 150 words and should be a concise overview of the objectives of the project, the project activities, the location of the project, the expected outcome(s), and the rationale for the work proposed. Please note: project summaries of applications that receive funding may be posted on program-related websites and/or included in notices that NOAA may send to members of Congress.

(c) 15-page Project Description. The project description section must not exceed 15 pages and must follow the requirements in IV.B.1, Content and Form of Applications. Page limits are inclusive of figures and other visual materials, but exclusive of title pages, budget information, references, work plan/milestone chart, data sharing plan, resumes, description of NOAA involvement, current and pending support, and letters of commitment. A template for the project description can be found online at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html.
The proposed project must be described completely. The project description should clearly describe the project's goals, implementation, and management. It should provide a full justification/rationale for the project. Specifically, this section should include:

(i) The objective(s), expected outputs and outcomes (see definitions in Section I.A.7), and an explanation for how the activities and expected outputs and outcomes support the goal of this funding program and advance NOAA’s mission, as described in section I.A;

(ii) Description of the proposed activities, including: all activities that will be undertaken and/or products that will be created; the need for those products or activities; and the process that will be used to develop and implement all activities and products. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the proposed project is informed by best practices and should cite appropriate literature references that support the proposed approach. Some examples of the literature on best practices can be found at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/elg/resilience_assets.html. Applications should clearly demonstrate how target audiences will be actively engaged in project activities. Examples of

active engagement include interactive discussions, deliberations, or investigations about an issue or participation in simulations where different scenarios and solutions are explored;

(iii) A justification of the project's geographic scale and a discussion of the applicability of implementation at larger scales or in multiple locations;

(iv) A discussion of the target audience(s) that specifically identifies whether the audience(s) is (are) K-12, public, or both and whether the proposed project will reach under-served groups;

(v) A description of the project partners' roles and the coordination among project partners; specifically, highlight any partnerships involving the use of NOAA assets (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/elg/resilience_assets.html). (Note: letters of commitment articulating project partners' roles should be submitted as a separate section of the application. Also, additional details of NOAA involvement are provided in IV.B.1(f) below);

(vi) A description of the qualifications and capabilities of the personnel who will be involved in the project, as well as the institutional profiles and capabilities of the applicant and other partner institutions; include a justification for how the personnel/partnering institution(s) provide both educational and scientific expertise needed to carry out the project;

(vii) A description of how the project will incorporate NOAA data, data access tools, and/or other NOAA assets into the project activities (for a partial listing of NOAA assets, see http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/resilience_assets.html);

(viii) A description of whether or not relevant state and/or local hazard mitigation and/or adaptation plans exist for the project area, and if so, how the project will leverage and incorporate these plans into the proposed project; also include a discussion of how the project team will collaborate with institutions that are involved in efforts to develop or implement such plans;

(ix) A description of how the project activities will be evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting stated project goals and objectives as well as the goal of this funding opportunity. Also discuss who will carry out the evaluation, and, if the evaluator is part of the applicant institution, verify that he/she is not otherwise substantively involved in the project. See Section I.A.4 for further guidance on project evaluation;

(x) A description of how project results will be disseminated beyond the audience

immediately involved in the activities of the project and how awareness and use of NOAA resources will increase;

(d) Proposed Work Plan/Milestone Chart. In a chronological fashion, indicate the tasks to be completed by the applicant and other project partners, including specific project deliverables. Provide a timeline of major tasks and potential outcomes covering the duration of the proposed project, including project evaluation. The tasks should relate both to the budget and to the intended deliverables or activities. There is no page limit for this element.

(e) Brief Resumes. For all Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs) listed on the applicants title page, provide resumes of no more than 3 pages per person that include a list of professional and academic credentials. Resumes of additional key personnel from applicant institutions and project partners are optional but recommended, as this will help reviewers to assess the applicants' qualifications.

(f) Description of NOAA Involvement in Project. Describe the involvement of any NOAA partners in the project, including the personnel involved and the activities and tasks that they will undertake. Include a description of any costs associated with those activities that go beyond in-kind support from their NOAA office and will require financial support from the Office of Education. These costs cannot exceed 10% of the total federal request for the proposed project. The description of these costs should provide enough detail to allow the Office of Education staff and the review panel to evaluate the reasonableness and appropriateness of the these costs. Costs can include salaries, travel, equipment, contractual and/or any other costs directly supporting the NOAA project partner(s). These costs should not be included in the Title Page, SF-424, SF-424A, or the project budget table and narrative and do not count toward the budget minimum and maximum described in section II.A, (Funding Availability). If there is no NOAA partner, this must be clearly indicated on a separate page under a heading, "Description of NOAA Involvement in Project". There is no page limit for this element.

(g) Current and Pending Support. Describe all current and pending Federal and non-Federal funding, including application(s) to this funding opportunity, for all PIs and co-PIs listed on the title page. The capability of the designated PIs and co-PIs to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects must be assessable. Therefore, please list the percentage of time the individuals have committed to other Federal or non-Federal grant-funded projects. If any PI or Co-PI has no current or pending funding, this must be clearly indicated on a separate page under a heading "Current and Pending Support". There is no page limit for this element. A template for summarizing Current and Pending Support can be found online at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html.

(h) Budget. Applications must include a budget that contains both a detailed table and a narrative, in addition to the required official budget form (SF-424A). Both the table and the narrative should use the same categories as shown on the SF-424A form.

The budget section of the application should provide enough detail to allow Office of Education staff and the review panel to evaluate the level of effort proposed by investigators and staff on the project. The budget must include all applicant expenses anticipated in order to realistically describe for reviewers what resources will be necessary to carry out the project. The budget must provide a year-by-year breakdown using the same costs categories of the SF424A. When appropriate, the narrative and table must provide details on:

- Personnel salaries and fringe benefits (specifying the salary plus the percent of time and/or number of months devoted to the project for every individual to be paid by the project).

- Travel including per person and per trip costs for transportation, lodging, and meals. Applicants should request funding to allow the PI(s) to attend PI conferences every year during the life of the award. Travel costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem, or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the non-Federal entity's non-federally-funded activities and in accordance with non-Federal entity's written travel reimbursement policies. In the absence of an acceptable, written non-Federal entity policy regarding travel costs, the rates and amounts established under 5 U.S.C. 5701-11, (“Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances”), or by the Administrator of General Services, or by the President (or his or her designee) pursuant to any provisions of such subchapter must apply to travel under Federal awards (48 C.F.R. 31.205-46(a)) Federal travel per diem rates: http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877.

- Equipment and supplies, if applicable. See 2 C.F.R. §200.313 and See 2 C.F.R. §200.314 for additional guidance on equipment and supplies costs.

- Contractual costs, such as anticipated sub-awards. If sub-contracts or sub-awards will be made to project partners or others, the same amount of budget detail provided for the applicant institution's activities (broken down by the categories shown on the SF-424A form) should be provided for each sub-award. If any portion of the project will be conducted through consultants, subcontracts and/or sub-awards, you must follow the requirements set out at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.330 through 200.332, as applicable. If you select a consultant,

subcontractor and/or sub-awardee prior to submitting an application, indicate the process that you used for selection and provide a statement of his/her qualifications or background.

- Other costs, including printing, publications, evaluations, and communication expenses.

- Indirect costs, if applicable. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect costs, which are sometimes referred to as facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, are those costs incurred for common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitting without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect costs may include costs for basic operational functions, including lights, water, and insurance. If indirect costs are included, the negotiated rate must be requested, and the application must include a copy of the current, approved, negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government. Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees, however indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414 “Indirect (F&A) Costs,” any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.403 “Factors affecting allowability of costs.” If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), if an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, s/he may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce. 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

Applicants should include funding for project evaluation in their budgets. While the costs for

project evaluation may vary considerably, 10 to 20 percent of the total budget is a reasonable estimate of costs associated with a comprehensive project evaluation.

If appropriate, include in the budget narrative a description of any in-kind resources or equipment that will be provided to support this project.

See http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/budget_narrative_guidance-04.09.2015.pdf for guidance from NOAA's Grants Management Division regarding the budget narrative details. See www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html for a budget narrative template and model and a budget table model.

There is no page limit for this element.

(i) Data Sharing Plan. Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements. Environmental data are defined as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data, such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Data and information collected as part of the project evaluation are not considered environmental data and information.

We anticipate that most proposed projects under this funding announcement will not involve the collection of environmental data. If no data will be collected/created as part of the project, then this element of the application should consist of a single statement (on a separate page, under the heading "Data Sharing Plan") indicating that no data will be collected/created as part of this project. If an applicant's project does involve the collection of environmental data, the PI should contact one of the Federal Program Officers to discuss the content and form of an appropriate data sharing plan. There is no page limit for this element.

(j) References Cited. If literature references are cited in the project narrative, then a References Cited section should be included. Each reference should include the names of all authors in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication, the article title, publication or publication title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. While there is no established page limit, this section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside the 15-page project

description.

(k) Letters of Commitment. If substantive partnerships are described in the project description, letters of commitment should be provided. Letters of commitment are important for demonstrating the concrete involvement of project partners (including NOAA partners) and are reviewed as part of the application. Partner institutions that will be participating in program activities are strongly encouraged to submit letters of commitment indicating their interest in the topic and format of the proposed program, their willingness to participate, and how the program complements their strategic priorities. Letters of commitment from applicants and project partners that demonstrate a commitment on the part of their institutional leadership to implement and sustain the proposed activities should also be included.

(l) NEPA Questionnaire. The Office of Education has determined that applicants do not need to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:
(i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
(ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (e.g. DUNS number) 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 unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for applications is 11:59:59 pm EST on February 8, 2016. (Note that NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM EST.) Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered for funding. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by an automated receipt of the date and time of submission. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, there will be two automated email receipts sent to the application submitter with the date and

time of submission (the first email confirms receipt, the second email confirms that there are no errors with your application submission and that it has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If both email confirmation receipts are not provided within two (2) days of application submission, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk and oed.grants@noaa.gov. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required elements have been appropriately submitted before the deadline. Additional instructions for Grants.gov can be found at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/faq_page.html.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted to this funding opportunity are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

F. Funding Restrictions

There are no funding restrictions.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov APPLY (http://www.grants.gov). Hard copy and/or email application submissions will not be accepted.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

(1) Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (30 points): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA's Federal, regional, or local activities. The application should describe how well the proposed project addresses NOAA's stated objectives and priorities. Reviewers will evaluate:

- How well the project addresses NOAA’s mission and the goal of this funding

opportunity, which is, to strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience to extreme weather events and other environmental hazards (5 points);

- The extent to which the project focuses on building an understanding of Earth systems and an awareness of the threats and vulnerabilities associated with a community's (or multiple communities') location(s) (5 points);

- The extent to which the project is focused on increasing participants ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically (5 points);

- The extent to which the application explains how the project will utilize NOAA assets to accomplish its goals, and, where applicable, how they will involve NOAA employees or affiliates to facilitate the use of those assets (5 points);

- The extent to which the project will involve groups from under-served or at-risk communities (4 points);

- Whether the project leverages and incorporates relevant state and local hazard adaptation/mitigation plans for the community or communities that would be served by the proposed project (if such plans exist) and whether the project will collaborate with institutions in their efforts to implement existing plans or develop plans where none exist. (5 points); and

- If environmental data will be collected as part of the project activities, has a Data/Information Sharing Plan been included that meets the requirements described in this FFO (1 point).

(2) Technical/scientific merit (40 points): This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The completeness and adequacy of detail in the project description (3 points);

- The extent to which the project has clearly stated outcomes and objectives that are

measurable, will be measured, and are appropriate to the target audience(s) (5 points);

- The overall technical feasibility of the project, including whether the proposed approach is educationally and technically sound (i.e., based on best practices) (10 points);

- The extent to which the project incorporates established scientific evidence about the threats and vulnerabilities facing selected communities and considers socio-economic and ecological factors (4 points);

- The extent to which the project actively engages the participants in learning, and addresses real-world issues (5 points);

- The likelihood that the project will increase awareness and use of NOAA assets among target audiences (5 points);

- Whether there is a clear delineation of responsibilities of the project's key personnel and whether there are adequate communication mechanisms in place for coordinating among all project partners (3 points);

- Whether there are appropriate mechanisms to evaluate the success of the project in meeting the anticipated outcomes, including impacts on the target audience(s) (3 points); and

- If the project gives consideration to the applicability of project components to other locations (2 points).

(3) Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15 points): This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The relevance of the qualifications of the PIs, co-PIs, and key personnel, including their previous experience in designing, implementing and managing the proposed activities (9 points);

- The evaluators' previous experience in designing, implementing and managing evaluations appropriate for the target audiences and proposed activities (3 points); and

- The likelihood that the applicants and project partners have the appropriate institutional resources to carry out the proposed activities and have the ability to complete the proposed

project successfully (3 points).

(4) Project Costs (10 points): The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The appropriateness of the requested resources to accomplish the proposed work within the indicated time-frame (5 points);

- Whether the budget is sufficient for the scope of the evaluation planned (3 points); and

- The adequacy of detail in the budget table and narrative to allow an informed determination of how well all costs associated with the project are justified (2 points).

(5) Outreach and Education (5 points): This criterion ascertains whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Reviewers will evaluate:

- How the information on the design and outcomes of the proposed project will be disseminated to relevant audiences beyond those participating directly in the project (5 points).

B. Review and Selection Process

Upon receipt of an application by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements regarding eligibility and completeness of the application. Minimum requirements, among other elements, include all of the following:

- All applicants are eligible to apply;
- Applications were received on time;
- All required elements of the applications are present and follow format requirements;
- The sum of the requested budgets of all applicants is no more than $500,000 and no less than $250,000 for all years of the project (not including any costs associated with NOAA partners, if applicable); and
- Project duration is 2 to 5 years.

All applications that meet the minimum requirements will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in section V.A.

If 40 or fewer applications meet eligibility and minimum requirements, the applications will be evaluated and scored by a single panel of independent reviewers, who are Federal or non-Federal experts, each having expertise in a separate area so that the reviewers as a whole cover the spectrum of activities covered by the applications received. The reviewers will score each application using the evaluation criteria provided in section V.A. A rank order of all applications will be established by averaging the individual review ratings for each application. The review panel will not provide consensus advice.

If more than 40 applications meet eligibility and minimum requirements, the review process will comprise two parts: a mail review followed by a panel review. The mail review will consist of each application being reviewed by a minimum of 3 reviewers, who will provide written comments and assign scores based on the evaluation criteria in section V.A. No consensus advice will be given. The Program Office staff will calculate the average score for each application, which will result in a preliminary ranked list of applications. The Program Office staff will look for a natural break in scores of the rank-ordered applications to determine the top number of applications closest to 40 that will be reviewed by the panel.

Following the mail review, a panel of reviewers will read, score and provide comments on the applications selected for review. The panel will then meet to discuss and provide final funding recommendations to the Office of Education. After discussing a particular application, the individual reviewers on the panel will provide a summary of their comments and re-score the applications. The rank order of all applications will be established by averaging the individual panel reviewers' final scores for each application they reviewed. The panel will give no consensus advice.

The Federal Program Officers (FPOs) will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review process. The FPOs will make their recommendations for funding based on rank order and the selection factors listed in the next section (V.C) to the Selecting Official, the Director of NOAA Education, who is responsible for making final recommendations to the NOAA Grants Officer.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will select applications in the rank order established by each panel unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
   a. Geographically
   b. By type of institutions

c. By type of partners
d. By subject areas
e. By project types

3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors;
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Selected applicants may be asked to modify objectives, project plans, timelines, and/or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Review of applications will occur from March through June, 2016. It is anticipated that recommendations for funding under this announcement will be made by September 30, 2016. Projects funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will start no earlier than October 1, 2016.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification (either hard copy or electronically) from the Office of Education by September 30, 2016, that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, authorized by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be made by e-mail from Grants Online to the Authorized Representative of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification (either hard copy or electronically) from the Office of Education by September 30, 2016, that their reviewed application was not recommended for funding (declined) or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements prescribed in Sections IV.B and IV.D.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA program staff. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of federal funding until an official notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Officer.

After applicants are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the grants officer performs administration reviews. These reviews may include the financial stability of an applicant, 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. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, special award conditions that correspond to the degree of risk may be applied.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain special award conditions for activities outlined within the application. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award as applicable and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

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 of 2006, to the extent applicable, any application awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management Registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration) and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25 and 170 (2015), (see http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=61d8b7e1303dc7a8551766b44801c3cd&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfrv1_02.tpl#0).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

2. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS: Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014, effective December 26, 2014 (79 FR 78390). These are also available at https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30297. Awards made under this announcement are subject to the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/DOC_Standard_Terms_12_26_2014.pdf.

3. RESTRICTIONS GOVERNING MAKING GRANTS TO CORPORATIONS CONVICTED OF FELONY CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS AND/OR UNPAID FEDERAL TAX LIABILITIES: In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, execution by an applicant of the “Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law” will be required in a format requested by NOAA before any award will be made under this FFO.

4. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of each applicant's project that is seeking NOAA funds. Detailed information on NOAA's compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including the NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm. Consequently, as part of the application package, and under its description of project 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 application. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the

environment.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT AND REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT: Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

6. PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT: This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

7. GEOSPATIAL DATA COLLECTION: The recipients must comply with Executive Order 12906 regarding any and all geospatial data collected or produced under cooperative agreements. This includes documenting all geospatial data in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Content Standard for digital geospatial data. The Program uses only the existing NOAA Federal financial assistance awards package requirements per 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24.

8. DATA SHARING PLAN: Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

(a) Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as

part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

(b) The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

(c) Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

9. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT: The Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552) (FOIA) sets forth the rules and procedures to make requested material, information, and records publicly available. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under FOIA, contents of applications submitted by applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as “Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information.” Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

10. DUN AND BRADSTREET DATA UNIVERSAL NUMBERING SYSTEM AND CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION: 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 of 2006, to the extent applicable, any application awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), now a part of the System for Award Management (SAM) and is located at www.sam.gov, and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170 (2010). The guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 25 may be located at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=6d961d39895dc9c6bff64260294764d7&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5, and the guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 170 may be located at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=681d752e5910c7fe4b0d4cff8b8ebb3d&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5.

11. EXECUTIVE ORDER 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review): It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

12. EXECUTIVE ORDER 13132 (Federalism): It has been determined that this notice does

not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

C. Reporting

Progress reports should be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online system and are due semi-annually on October 30th and April 30th for the preceding 6-month period (April 1st to September 30th and October 1st to March 30th) or portion thereof if the project start or end-date falls in the middle of one of these intervals. A final comprehensive report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award. Progress on each award is communicated to NOAA in the form of performance progress reports, the requirements of which are outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.301. Progress reports should provide specific, project-related information such as details on the accomplishments, outputs and outcomes that have occurred during the reporting period, corresponding with the goals and objectives identified in the project narrative. A suggested template for semi-annual and final progress reports will be provided to grant recipients. The final comprehensive report shall include an executive summary of the project's outcomes, including major findings of the project evaluation, that can be shared publicly online and in print as desired by NOAA's Office of Education.

Federal Cash Transaction reports, form SF-425, should be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online system and are due semi-annually on October 30th and April 30th for the preceding 6-month period (April 1st to September 30th and October 1st to March 30th) or portion thereof if the project start or end-date falls in the middle of one of these intervals. Financial reports are due for all award recipients no later than 30 days after each 6-month period. The Final Financial Status report, form SF-425, is a comprehensive financial report that is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

You can contact the Federal Program Officers: Carrie McDougall, John McLaughlin, Sarah Schoedinger, or Christopher Nelson at oed.grants@noaa.gov. For further information about the NOAA Office of Education, please visit the office website at www.oesd.noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Two informational teleconferences with the program officers will occur on Thursday, December 10, 2015 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EST and Tuesday, January 5, 2016 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EST. Interested applicants may obtain the phone number and related teleconference information by visiting http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding. Whenever possible, individuals from the same institution should try to join the teleconference from the same phone line.

Note: Links to related information for applying are available at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding.