NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

2023 Inflation Reduction Act

Climate Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes, and Territories Competition

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC)

Funding Opportunity Title: 2023 Inflation Reduction Act Climate Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes, and Territories Competition

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007783

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates:

- Letters of Intent are due at 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 30, 2023.
- The deadline for application submission is 11:59 pm Eastern Time on February 13, 2023.
- Letters of Intent or applications received after the above deadlines will not be reviewed or considered.

Funding Opportunity Description:

A climate ready nation requires a climate ready workforce. NOAA will assist communities in coastal and Great Lakes states and territories so they may form partnerships that train workers and place them into jobs that enhance climate resilience. This competition is designed to meet the emerging and existing skills needs of employers while helping workers enter good jobs, so that together they may enhance climate resilience. NOAA envisions making between 10-20 awards under this competition, at amounts ranging from $500,000 to $10 million each. NOAA is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for qualified organizations to form and support partnerships that will work collaboratively to support regional economies and their associated workforces by developing training programs that build in-demand skills, offering wraparound services that allow workers to successfully enroll in and complete training, and helping workers enter or advance into good jobs that enhance climate resilience. Wraparound services allow people to overcome barriers to participate in the program, especially individuals in underserved groups. Examples of wraparound services include transportation, childcare, elder care, and housing services. NOAA heavily prioritizes efforts to reach individuals from historically underserved communities (see Executive Order (EO) 13985; see https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/), , and to benefit disadvantaged communities (see Executive Order 14008; see https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/ and defined in M-23-09, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf). T

Moreover, Executive Order 14096 recognizes that the Federal Government must continue to remove barriers to the meaningful involvement of the public in such decision-making, particularly those

barriers that affect members of communities with environmental justice concerns (see https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/04/21/executive-order-on-revitalizing-our-nations-commitment-to-environmental-justice-for-all/). Ultimately, the purpose of this NOFO is to ensure workers in coastal states and territories are trained for and hired into quality private- and public-sector jobs in the U.S. economy that are needed to increase resilience to climate-related hazards (https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/NOAA_FY2226_Strategic_Plan.pdf).

This document sets out requirements for submitting to **NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007783**.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Through this Inflation Reduction Act Climate Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes, and Territories Competition (hereafter referred to as "Climate Ready Workforce Competition''), NOAA will advance the Federal Ocean Climate Action Plan (see https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf), make equity central to our work, and support economic growth–all toward the agency's mission of science, service, and stewardship. Specifically, funded efforts will prepare and place workers in good jobs that enhance climate resilience and will advance environmental justice.

For purposes of this opportunity, a coastal state follows the definition in 16 U.S.C. § 1453(4), and includes Great Lakes states and US territories; the District of Columbia is also eligible under this opportunity.

NOAA may make changes or additions or cancel this NOFO at any time. All changes will be communicated via Grants.gov.

A. Overview and Program Information

New federal, state, private sector, and philanthropic investments across the United States are advancing historic efforts to confront climate change, make the nation more resilient to growing threats to health and well-being, and drive much-needed economic investments into historically underserved communities (see https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Inflation-Reduction-Act-Guidebook.pdf). The influx of resources has created demand for jobs whose skills require specialized training. This competition is designed to meet the emerging and existing skills needs of employers focused on climate resilience, while helping workers enter good jobs that enhance climate resilience. NOAA expects the results from this opportunity to directly support the actions from the U.S. Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf), including, but not limited to:

- Promote coastal community resilience strategies that are adaptive, equitable, and based on best practices.
- Support transformational resilience investments in coastal habitat restoration, conservation and in coastal community resilience.
- Advance evaluation and adoption of nature-based solutions, such as living shorelines, to build resilience against climate-driven coastal hazards.

- Reduce climate threats and improve the resiliency of climate-vulnerable protected species, including marine mammals.

The Climate Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes, and Territories Competition will advance the President's Justice40 Initiative established by EO 14008, which set a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain federal investments in climate, clean energy, and other investment areas flow to disadvantaged communities. The Climate Ready Workforce Competition is aligned with and advances the goals of the Justice40 Initiative, including to improve the quality of life, environment, and health of communities. Applicants should use the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, created by the White House Council on Environmental Quality, to identify geographically located disadvantaged communities or "Justice40 communities" that will benefit from this program (https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/; https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf).

For the purposes of this NOFO, "good jobs that enhance climate resilience" meet two sets of criteria. The first set of criteria is defined by the Departments of Labor and Commerce Good Jobs Principles, whereby "Good Jobs" address benefits; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; empowerment and representation; job security and conditions; and pay, among other factors. Additional details on the dimensions of job quality are available at https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs/principles#:~:text=Organizational%20Culture%3A%20All%20workers%20belong,fair%2C%20transparent%2C%20and%20equitable

The second set of criteria addresses the phrase "enhance climate resilience." Within this NOFO, worker roles that perform one or more of the following climate-informed skills shall qualify as "enhancing climate resilience":

1. Apply equity-centered climate resilience principles such as the following:
    a. Articulate historical precedents leading to differential exposure of people to climate-related hazards.
    b. Include diverse voices in delivering climate resilience priorities.
    c. Establish community consent and support for climate resilience priorities, including how to identify impacts of greatest concern before, during, and/or after a climate-related event.
2. Reduce exposure, vulnerability, and risk to climate-related impacts, including but not limited to:
    a. Apply best available science and knowledge, such as projections of climate risk.
    b. Evaluate potential climate-related impacts so that the return on investment of one project may be evaluated relative to that of another.
    c. Measure initial conditions, as well as improvements to climate resilience.
    d. Evaluate and measure actions to enhance climate resilience, taking into consideration multiple value systems to ensure long-term sustainability. Measures may include, but are not limited to, monetary value, community values, continuity of operations, supply chain reliability, business functions, and ecosystem services.
    e. Develop funding and finance plans for resilience projects that include all phases of implementation and project sustainability.
3. Design, build, operate, maintain, and/or improve the infrastructure and systems (including

nature-based systems) needed to reduce climate-related vulnerability and/or risk to people, assets, services, resources, ecosystems, or other attributes valued by individuals, businesses, communities, and/or governments.

4. Other relevant skills.
    a. The applicant must demonstrate that "other relevant skills" are necessary to complete climate resilience work that may be missing in the applicant's workforce.
    b. Such skills may be defined by climate-resilience plans, employers, and resilience experts.

Skills that solely lead to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., "mitigate climate change") as their primary focus (for example, building renewable energy infrastructure) are not included under "good jobs that enhance climate resilience," for the purpose of this funding opportunity. However, where greenhouse gas reductions are co-benefits of resilience efforts, such projects are welcome.

In this NOFO, applicants can use funds to develop or fill "good jobs that enhance climate resilience" in a variety of ways. A project may address one or more skills, across one or more roles, and at a variety of geographic scales. Below are several descriptive scenarios describing how climate-informed skills might be incorporated into new or enhanced worker roles through this opportunity. Even if not explicitly described in these examples, all skills from the list above may be cited as relevant within a given proposal.

Scenario 1 - one skill, one role: An investment-oriented professional organization, in collaboration with major lending institutions, establishes a partnership to train 70 employees (who were slated to be laid off due to technological redundancies) and obtains commitments to hire them to a new chosen career path as Climate Equity Officers within multiple regional offices after they learn how to establish baselines and assess risks that climate variability and change pose to capital investments and customers' collateral.

Scenario 2 - one skill, multiple roles: Recognizing that some groups face a greater risk of heat-related illness than others (e.g., as a result of age or poor health) or lack resources that enable them to adapt or recover, a major municipal health-care provider partners with community groups to create 125 entry to mid-level positions for heat-health outreach specialists/assistants, nurses, and home health coordinators. Newly hired professionals will talk with patients, visit homes, help residents identify current and future heat-health risks, and connect those residents with community resources to mitigate them.

Scenario 3 - multiple skills, one role: A region's coastal resilience plan requires crews that can address coastal erosion using nature-based solutions. One thousand workers are retrained in multiple cohorts for entry-level work on coastal landscapes, with specific training on erosion prevention, uses of native plants, and wetland restoration.

Scenario 4 - multiple skills, one role: A new partnership has identified a new local government worker role, Climate Resilience Officer, is needed in urban communities in a

multi-state region to work with disadvantaged community leadership to incorporate local knowledge of recurrent flooding and elevated flood risks; armed with that knowledge, they will secure funds to protect at-risk populations and improve stormwater management systems, transportation networks, and other critical infrastructure. They propose to recruit and train four cohorts of 20 people each, for a total of 80 new hires.

Scenario 5 - multiple skills, one role: A coalition of community-based organizations in historically underserved communities come together to recruit and train 65 grant managers who have the skills to solicit, write and manage grants to improve climate resilience in those communities.

Scenario 6 - multiple skills, multiple roles: The state's Climate Action Council brings municipal, county and state agencies together to identify a diverse set of needed skills, for which 30 new transportation analysts and 40 new water resource planners will be trained and hired to implement community climate resilience plans.

Scenario 7 - multiple skills, multiple roles: A coastal city has received a large climate resilience federal grant to implement the next stage of their climate resilience master plan. Through the plan, they have identified essential worker roles that need to be recruited to build a comprehensive flood defense infrastructure project, which includes appropriate use of nature-based solutions, that will protect the city's waterfront from strengthening coastal storms for decades into the future. To complete the project and ensure its upkeep over time, the city needs to hire 45 resilience landscape technicians and 30 environmental inspectors to bury floodwalls, design landscapes that create a line of elevated ridges, and conduct ongoing modifications and maintenance.

Successful applicants can receive funding for two types of activities:

- **Program design** for partnerships to identify the skills needed by industry and workers; develop the skills training curriculum and materials in collaboration with NOAA (see Program Priorities in Section I.B.); and secure technical expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by employers, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers.
- **Program implementation** to deliver workforce training and wraparound services (e.g., childcare, transportation) that place workers into good jobs that enhance climate resilience through one or more sector partnerships.

All funded projects will be employer-led, in line with the Department of Commerce's workforce principles (https://www.commerce.gov/issues/workforce-development), and will support Americans in securing and retaining good jobs that enhance climate resilience in coastal states, tribes, and territories. A competitive application will seek to place at least 50 workers into jobs but could be as high as 1,000 or more workers, through the duration of their project.

1. Definitions and Essential Concepts

For the purposes of this NOFO, several terms have specific definitions, as outlined below.

A **partnership** (see Figure 1) consists of employers and strategic partners who join together to train and place workers into good jobs that enhance climate resilience. The lead entity of a partnership is referred to in this NOFO as a "**Backbone Organization**." The Backbone Organization serves as an intermediary across all the partners and must be an eligible applicant (Section III.A.). **Strategic partners** can include government, educational institutions (including community and technical colleges), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, and/or community-based organizations. Partnerships are encouraged to collaborate with NOAA-affiliated entities, which include NOAA programs, offices, and labs, as well as NOAA-funded programs (see Section III.A.3. for details).

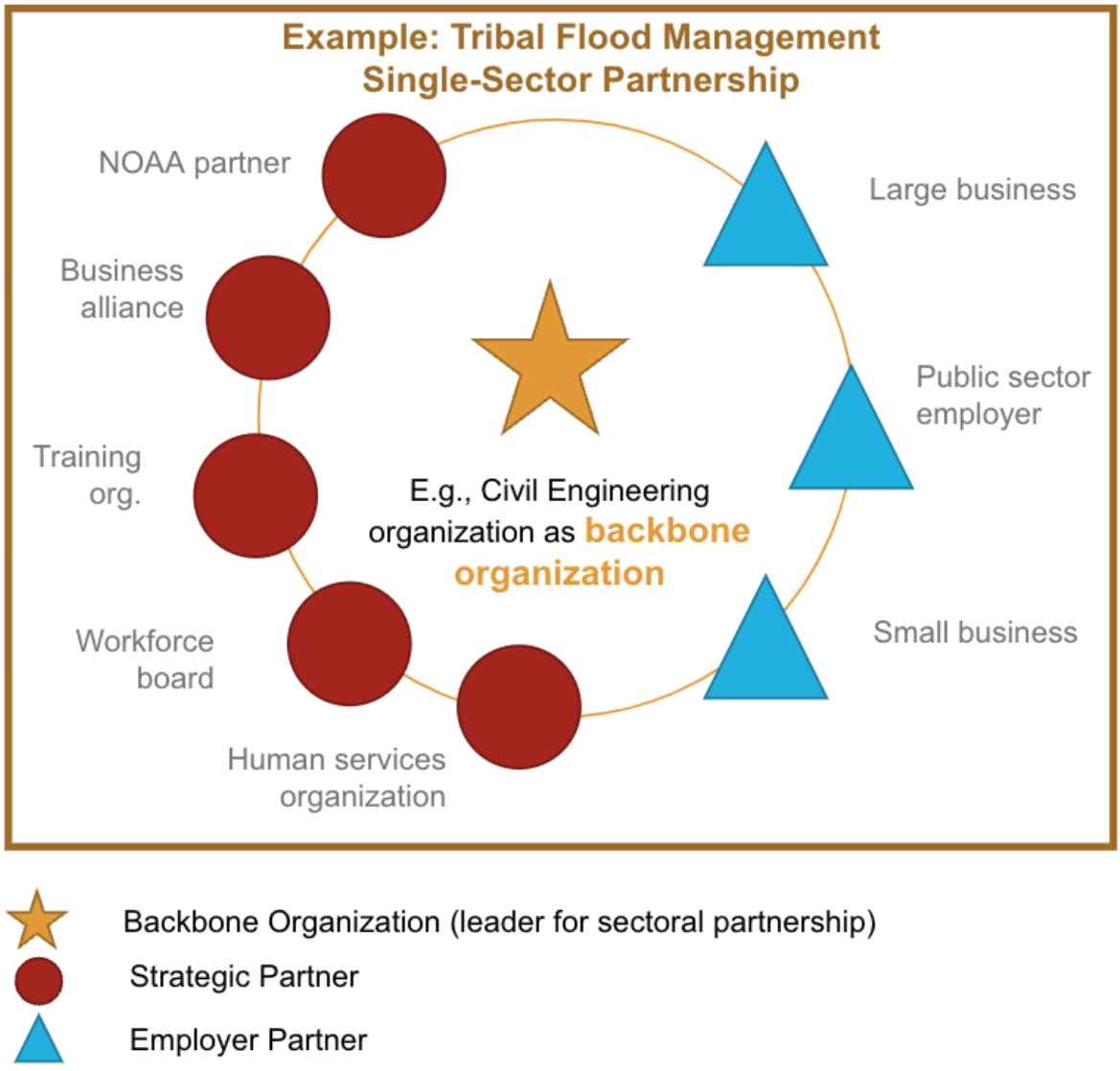


Figure 1. The figure illustrates how employers work with strategic partners to train and hire workers in a partnership.

Resilience is the capacity to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption. **Climate**

resilience, more specifically, refers to building resilience to climate-related impacts and requires that the frequency and severity of climate-related impacts be factored into planning, infrastructure, services, and other relevant operations. More information on climate resilience is available at https://toolkit.climate.gov/steps-to-resilience/steps-resilience-overview. Enhancing climate resilience can include retrofitting or building new infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and "soft" measures such as administrative changes, preparedness, and programs that enhance people's adaptability to climate-related impacts. Climate resilience is strengthened by reducing the potential for future injury, enhancing "up-time" for employers and/or supply chains, and strengthening capacity to troubleshoot and address vulnerabilities. Application submissions must explicitly demonstrate how the partnership will place people in good jobs that enhance climate resilience. Additional information about enhancing resilience is available at https://toolkit.climate.gov/content/practitioners-guidance-implementing-steps-resilience.

2. Components of a Climate Ready Workforce

The goal of this opportunity is to (a) connect the in-demand and emerging climate resilience skills needs of employers with qualified workers and (b) help workers find and keep good jobs and advance along their chosen career path, while working to enhance resilience to climate-related impacts.

Applicants to this opportunity should be Backbone Organizations who will lead partnerships. Successful applicants will serve as intermediaries who play a convening and coordination role among project participants. Successful applicants will ensure programs are successfully implemented, meet employer needs, are leading to long-term positive outcomes for workers and their communities, and meet agreed-upon milestones. Successful applicants will include proactive employer engagement and mobilization linked to explicit commitments to hire (see Employer Commitments and Leadership in Section I.A.2.e).

Successful applicants to this NOFO will receive funding for program design for partnerships and/or program implementation (see Program Priorities in Section I.B. for more detail). NOAA anticipates making an overarching award to each successful Backbone Organization. NOAA will further approve the release of award funds over the period of performance based on successful completion of specific applicant-proposed benchmarks that will be clearly identified in the award as the organization moves through its objectives as articulated in its application. The Backbone Organization may make subawards as necessary and as approved by the grant program manager. Applicants should submit one application for program design and/or program implementation, as necessary.

Partnerships funded under this NOFO should connect employers in an industry or sector with regionally relevant groups, including State, Tribal, and local governmental entities, indigenous-led organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development boards, Career OneStops (https://www.careeronestop.org/), employer-facing organizations and employer associations, education and training providers, community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations, worker-serving organizations (WSOs), labor unions, professional associations, and/or other relevant groups with roles or responsibilities in advancing resilience to climate-related

impacts. Those employers, industries, and sectors are listed below under Eligibility Information (Section III).

NOAA encourages applicants to recruit workers with barriers to the labor market, including historically underserved and under-resourced communities and individuals (as defined by Exec Order No. 13985; https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/) and including, but not limited to, communities of color, women, people with disabilities, and others facing employment barriers; disconnected youth, such as individuals in their late teens to mid-twenties with limited education, experiencing social exclusion, with lack of work experience, and/or with few opportunities to develop mentors and valuable work connections; individuals in recovery, where "recovery" is defined as the process of improved physical, psychological, and social wellbeing and health following cessation or reductions in substance use; individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants; those participating in the public benefits programs; and veterans and military spouses.

While not all applications will cover each criterion equally, applicants will likely address each of the following to successfully compete under this program:

- include all necessary partners before workforce solutions are designed;
- cut across traditional economic development, workforce, education, and social services system silos;
- target in-demand climate resilience skills and service delivery within relevant economic sectors;
- create opportunities for workers with barriers to employment;
- lead to good jobs that enhance climate resilience; and
- consider the economic realities of a region, industry, and sector in assessing workforce demand and training needs.

Prospective applicants should note that Section III sets out *eligibility* criteria for applications, and only applications meeting the *eligibility* criteria will be considered. NOAA will evaluate and select applications according to the *evaluation* criteria set forth in Section V. Applicants who are unsure whether their proposed project is eligible under this NOFO should contact NOAA at the email address listed in Section VII.

a. Regional, Industry, and Occupation Focus

The size and scope of a given partnership can vary significantly based on the needs of the employers and workers in a region and the focus of the partnership itself.

Successful applicants will train workers for and place workers into good jobs that enhance climate resilience, as defined above (Section I.A.). Among other things, these jobs can help execute the climate resilience projects funded through other Federal grants; support industries in operating in new ways given the impacts of climate change; and help address the impacts of climate change.

b. Benchmark Approach to Funding

The size of award available under this NOFO will depend on the proposed geographic, industry/sector, and occupation coverage of a given partnership. Applicants should justify their budget requests by referencing those factors. Each applicant shall be a Backbone Organization and an Eligible Applicant (see Section III.A) with convening power in the region and the capacity to coordinate all relevant groups necessary for the partnership.

NOAA may require applicants to demonstrate they have met certain, pre-determined benchmarks before accessing the full amount of their award.

The following hypothetical example is designed to help explain how NOAA anticipates awarding funds and implementing benchmarks:

> A Backbone Organization submits an application on behalf of a partnership to design and then execute a training program, including funds for trainers, leased facilities, equipment purchase, childcare, transportation, and coaching services.
>
> NOAA may approve an award to the Backbone Organization. Before the Backbone Organization can access program implementation funds, it must demonstrate it already has sufficient program design standards in place to move to program implementation.

c. Examples Highlighting Distinct Approaches to this NOFO

Each region, employer, or sector of the U.S. and its territories has distinct climate resilience needs. One region may need to build and design a new climate resilience partnership. Another region may already have elements of an effective partnership in place but seek funding to combine those components in a unique way. A third region may have a partnership that functions well and is ready to move forward with implementation projects, expand the partnership to other regions, or support other industries and occupations or skills needs within an industry.

For example, a community college may develop a partnership by matching employers (each of which has job openings that require similar skill sets), a local training provider, a labor management partnership, and a group of community colleges in the region (see, for example, https://theseedcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/COWSSEED_ResiliencyReport_1014_web.pdf). Their partnership prepares workers to meet employers' climate resilience needs.

A partnership may include one or more community-based organizations that provide wraparound services to support workers during training and apprenticeships (see, for example, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Advancing-Equitable-Workforce-Development-for-Infrastructure-Jobs_110122.pdf). Employers express interest in recruiting individuals who enroll in the training program; those employers commit to hiring and retaining workers who successfully complete the program.

A union might work with an employer or group of employers to create or scale a registered apprenticeship or an employer-led partnership that provides a work-and-learn model where workers can continue to work as they develop new skills. Training should teach foundational principles as well

as applied knowledge, should be applicable to more than one employer as much as practicable, and should help workers advance along a career path.

d. Training Models

There are several different skills training models that have proved to be effective if the fundamental characteristics we have described in previous sections are in place. In all effective models, an essential component is upfront employer engagement and mobilization, as well as employer commitments to hire workers (see Employer Commitments and Leadership in Section I.A.2.e).

Models may differ in the type of worker skills training they provide and will differ based on the sectors or occupations to which each training is aligned. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the NOAA guidebook, *Implementing the Steps to Resilience* (https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/46456), as they explore which employers may require workers to advance climate resilience. Training programs may include **Certification or Credentialing**, as well as **Work and Learn** programs.

Certification and Credentialing necessitates a worker to obtain an industry-recognized certification and/or license recognized by appropriate levels of government and/or private sector entities. **Work and Learn** might involve skills training, Registered Apprenticeships, or hybrid models. **Skills Training** programs provide workers with foundational and relevant climate resilience knowledge and skills needed for in-demand, good jobs. Trained workers advance along career pathways that enhance resilience to climate-related impacts. **Registered Apprenticeship Models** (https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/11/30/2022-26108/prevailing-wage-and-apprenticeship-initial-guidance-under-section-45b6bii-and-other-substantially) combine paid, on-the-job training (under the direction of a mentor) with classroom instruction and result in an industry-recognized credential (e.g., for climate resilience proficiency) within a worker role. As an example of a hybrid model: a worker is conditionally hired for a specific training period and earns wages, while receiving on-the-job training in foundational skills and applied concepts. After successful completion of the training period, the worker is officially hired as a full-time employee.

Programs may provide unemployed or underemployed workers or incumbent workers with opportunities for increased wages through targeted upskilling. Programs should include appropriate wraparound services.

Successful applicants will work in consultation with NOAA program managers to incorporate climate resilience concepts into interventions honed to a given sector or industry. NOAA program managers will work with project teams to promote successful applicants' work through NOAA and NOAA-funded programs and offices. Where possible, NOAA will provide technical assistance to successful applicants (see Section II.C.), to ensure that their training programs leverage the best available science, data, and practices in enhancing climate resilience, including utilizing NOAA's Digital Coast (https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/) and the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit (https://toolkit.noaa.gov).

e. Employer Commitments and Leadership

Successful applications will require strong leadership from employers.

NOAA is seeking applications that have **firm employer commitments to hire**. The employer commitment may come in different formats. Some examples include:

- Work-and-Learn, including Registered Apprenticeships and other earn and learn models (see Training Models in Section 1.A.2.d.);
- Conditional Hire, whereby an employer hires workers on the condition of successful completion of a training program and the successful demonstration of skill acquisition;
- Post-Training Hire, whereby employers commit to hiring a specific number of workers who successfully complete a training program.

Employers should be active in the partnership, steering its agenda toward what is needed in the marketplace. While partnerships contain a broad-based team of partners and are a "team effort" made up of educational institutions, professional organizations, workforce development consortia, and economic development leaders who collaborate to support the partnership, the partnership should focus on responding to industry and sectoral needs for bolstering resilience to climate-related impacts. Employers should define the priorities and be integrally involved in crafting the solutions (as opposed to providing input only). Employers define their skills needs and the priorities for addressing them. Therefore, if climate resilience priorities necessitate industry-specific techniques, the development, teaching, and evaluation of those industry-specific methods are considered within scope of what this competition may fund. Employers and the other partners should all commit appropriate resources to identify and solve any problems identified by the collaborators.

B. Program Priorities

In forming a partnership that supports training for and placement into jobs to enhance climate resilience, all projects considered for funding under this NOFO **must** address the program priorities set out below in bulleted text.

- Be consistent with NOAA's strategic focus to enhance climate resilience, make equity central to our work, and support economic growth and the agency's mission of science, service, and stewardship
  (see https://www.noaa.gov/organization/budget-finance-performance/value-to-society/noaa-fy22-26-strategic-plan).
- Support one or more of the following actions from the Ocean Climate Action Plan
  - Promote coastal community resilience strategies that are adaptive, equitable, and based on best practices.
  - Support transformational resilience investments in coastal habitat restoration, conservation and in coastal community resilience.
  - Advance evaluation and adoption of nature-based solutions, such as living shorelines, to build resilience against climate-driven coastal hazards.
  - Reduce climate threats and improve the resiliency of climate-vulnerable protected species, including marine mammals.

- Recruit workers (e.g., 50-1000+ over time) into "good jobs that enhance climate resilience," and train them for using one or more of the five climate-informed skills (see I.A.).
- Place workers in good jobs within coastal states, tribal nations, and territories or the District of Columbia, with a focus on training workers from the community where the jobs are located (per section VIII.H).
- Support work in communities with climate justice vulnerabilities and in disadvantaged communities as identified by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST; https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov).
- Identify and include relevant climate experts as strategic partners on the project team to inform project definition and skill development.
- Utilize NOAA's and/or its partners' scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, expertise, and/or other physical and intellectual assets to:
    - Document known climate stressors to justify why the identified jobs meet the definition of "good jobs that enhance climate resilience;"
    - Inform training designed to advance skills for workforce recruits

  For the purpose of this competition, NOAA-funded tools or assets may be used to meet the requirement for using NOAA resources. Additionally, non-NOAA climate resources may be used to supplement NOAA ones. A list of relevant resources can be found in the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit (https://toolkit.climate.gov/content/resources-climate-ready-workforce).
- Include appropriate wrap-around services (e.g., childcare, transportation) to support training participants in completing the training.
- Work collaboratively to grow regional workforces and their associated economies by (a) co-developing new or (b) enhancing existing training programs that meet the existing and emerging skills needs of employers.
- Build enduring capacity for a workforce that can enhance climate resilience.
- Carry out one or both of the following activities:
    - Program design for partnerships to identify the skills needed by industry and workers, develop the skills training curriculum and materials in collaboration with employers and NOAA (see Section I.A.2.d.), and secure technical expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by employers, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers and educators; and
    - Program implementation to deliver workforce training and wraparound services that place workers into good jobs that enhance climate resilience through new or expanded partnerships.
- Produce tangible metrics, e.g., employer commitments to hire, job placements, advancing workers along chosen career paths, and wage gain Metrics also should be proposed to track progress toward climate resilience, as well as economic, and equity goals.

NOAA **strongly encourages** partnerships to recruit those with barriers to the labor market, for example persons with disabilities; disconnected youth; individuals in recovery; individuals with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants; serving trainees participating in public benefits programs; and veterans and military spouses. NOAA also encourages partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, other Minority-Serving

Institutions, community colleges, or technical colleges.

In order to facilitate the use of NOAA's assets, partnerships are strongly encouraged to collaborate with relevant NOAA and NOAA-funded offices, programs, labs, and/or NOAA employees and affiliates within proposed partnerships.

The following activities, outputs, and outcomes would be responsive to this program. This list is not exhaustive, and projects are not limited to these specific categories of activity:

- Establishing, strengthening, or expanding partnerships to provide workers with good jobs that enhance climate resilience and employers with those skilled workers.
- Funding and staffing for the Backbone Organization to carry out functions outlined in Section III.A.1.
- Working with employers and other relevant groups to identify in-demand occupations and skills and securing employer commitments to hire workers who successfully complete skills training, including earning relevant industry-recognized credentials.
- Making potential training participants aware of available program resources, such as in-demand climate-resilient occupations, training programs that are aligned to those occupations, and wraparound services that can help workers access jobs and job training resources.
- Developing processes to translate employers' needs for worker skills into training models, including working with NOAA to ensure that training utilizes the best available data and science and climate resilience principles.
- Developing and executing outreach and recruitment plans to secure workers, particularly from underserved populations, to participate in the skills training program to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility in the targeted industry. These plans should be developed in partnership with relevant organizations that focus on target populations, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, other Minority-Serving Institutions, community colleges, or technical colleges.
- Addressing NOAA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility principles (see Eligible Applicants in Section III.A) in additional ways.
- Developing systems and processes to measure and track outcomes and metrics of skills training programs.
- Delivering quality skills training that places workers into good jobs that enhance climate resilience.
- Delivering technical assistance for employers on skills-based hiring practices to reduce bias, improve return on investment, and promote people-centered practices.
- Working with employers to adopt a strategy that builds a workforce that can enhance climate resilience.
- Securing and offering wraparound services for workers to participate in skills training programs (e.g., transportation, childcare, career coaching/navigation services).
- Leveraging federal and non-federal funds to expand reach.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (Pub.L. 117–169).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Under the Inflation Reduction Act, NOAA expects to award approximately $50 million for the Climate Ready Workforce Competition.

If an applicant is awarded funding, NOAA is under no obligation to provide any future funding in connection with that award or to make any future award(s). Amendments or renewals of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance are at the sole discretion of NOAA.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. The granting of any award is subject to the availability of funds at the time of award. NOAA will not be held responsible for application preparation costs.

NOAA anticipates making approximately 10-20 awards under this NOFO and scaling awards as appropriate to the proposed geographic, industry/sector, and worker role coverage of a given regional system.

Depending on demand under this NOFO, NOAA may exercise its discretion to adjust the total amount available under this NOFO.

B. Project/Award Period

Under the Climate Ready Workforce Competition, the project period of performance depends on the nature of the project for which the grant or cooperative agreement is awarded. Due to the need for recipients to meet identified benchmarks to proceed through project phases, NOAA expects projects to range in duration from 24 months to 48 months.

NOAA will work closely with award recipients to accommodate their projected timelines within reason and allowances of regulations and grant policies, though NOAA will prioritize programs that move expeditiously and are able to place workers into good jobs within 12-24 months of the award. NOAA expects that all projects will proceed efficiently and expeditiously, and NOAA encourages applicants to clearly document the timeline to start and complete the proposed project scope of work.

Awards are expected to be announced in June 2024. The anticipated start date for these awards is no earlier than August 1, 2024. Projects should be completed no later than July 31, 2028.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument is a cooperative agreement to an eligible applicant. A cooperative agreement is used when substantial involvement of the federal government during performance of the proposed work is anticipated. NOAA's “substantial involvement” (to be included in the terms and conditions of the award) will generally be collaboration between the NOAA *Program*

Team and the recipient to develop the project's scope of work and to codesign approaches that help participants:

- Understand the impacts of current and projected climate conditions on worker roles and apply that understanding to improve job efficacy.
- Understand the causes and effects of global climate change on a region, especially as they pertain to the differentiated worker roles within a proposed partnership.
- Understand the actions people can take to build resilience to potential climate-related impacts relevant to a job or region, including reduction of carbon pollution.
- Address exposure, vulnerability, risk, and opportunities in alignment with the Steps to Resilience (https://toolkit.climate.gov/steps-to-resilience/steps-resilience-overview; also see the Practitioner's Guide https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/46456) and additional climate resilience resources from NOAA and its funded partners.
- Attain other knowledge, skills, and abilities appropriate to the job, sector, and region that enhance resilience to climate-related impacts.

Other possible examples of NOAA's "substantial involvement" may include but are not limited to: (i) authority to halt immediately an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met; (ii) stipulation that the recipient must meet or adhere to specific procedural requirements before subsequent stages of a project may continue; and (iii) operational involvement and monitoring during the project to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Award funds will only be available to a recipient after the recipient has successfully completed specific applicant-proposed benchmarks identified in the award (see Section I.A.2.b).

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

1. **Applicant Type**

Eligible applicants for the Climate Ready Workforce Competition **must be** located in coastal states or territories as defined by 16 U.S.C. § 1453(4) or in the District of Columbia. They are:

- State governments;
- Tribal governments - the recognized governing body of any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, community, component band, or component reservation, individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of 2022 pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131);
- Territorial governments;
- Local governments;
- Institutions of higher education (as defined in subsection (a) of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a))), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, other Minority-Serving Institutions, community colleges, and technical colleges;
- Non-profit organizations or associations.

2. **Applicant Role**

Applicants will have all or most of the following characteristics:

- Convening power in the region, which is the ability to catalyze collective action by relevant actors to address regional climate challenges. Exercising convening power is not an end-goal but rather a means to foster collective action to achieve desirable development outcomes.
- Committed support of the executive leadership from the region and buy-in from appropriate relevant groups (e.g., a governor, mayor or chief executive of a jurisdiction, chief executives of major employers, heads of labor unions, presidents of two- and four-year institutions of higher education).
- Strong fundraising or budget-management capabilities or connection to a system with strong fundraising capabilities.
- Relationships and credibility with key players in the workforce ecosystem, including employers, governmental entities, state or local workforce development boards, educational institutions, labor organizations, and worker-serving organizations.
- A proven track record of coordinating across sectors and partners and of driving relevant groups to successful action.
- Dedicated full-time employee(s) focused on addressing regional workforce issues to support regional economic development.
- Ability to translate various sectors' objectives and key concerns to other sectors.
- Strong outreach and engagement capabilities.

Applicants do not need to have a background in climate resilience but are expected to engage with employers that have good jobs that enhance climate resilience, as well as with strategic partners who can work with the applicant and employers to ensure the training provides the skills needed for those jobs. The workers trained under this NOFO must fill jobs located in a coastal state, Tribal nation, or territory, with a focus on workers from the community where the jobs are located (per section VIII.H).

3. Partner Roles

Applications must include project teams that consist of committed partners. Partners are essential within the Climate Ready Workforce Competition. Partners may include government entities, educational institutions (including community and technical colleges), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, conservation corps, not-for-profits, philanthropic organizations, and/or community-based organizations. All partners do **not** need to be located in coastal states, Tribal nations, or territories (though, as stated elsewhere, applicants and resulting jobs must be).

We encourage applicants to partner and work directly with climate service practitioners, who themselves: have a range of experiences (Figure 2); are trained to evaluate climate risk and develop strategies responsive to that risk; and can help identify employers who need skilled workers related to climate resilience. Many workers in good jobs that enhance climate resilience will not be climate service practitioners, but often worker roles focused on climate resilience will benefit from expanded competency in working with climate service practitioners. Partnerships should clearly delineate the skills needed within a given region or sector to enhance climate resilience, in turn

supporting worker roles that function in collaboration with climate service practitioners, whose roles and functions are described below.

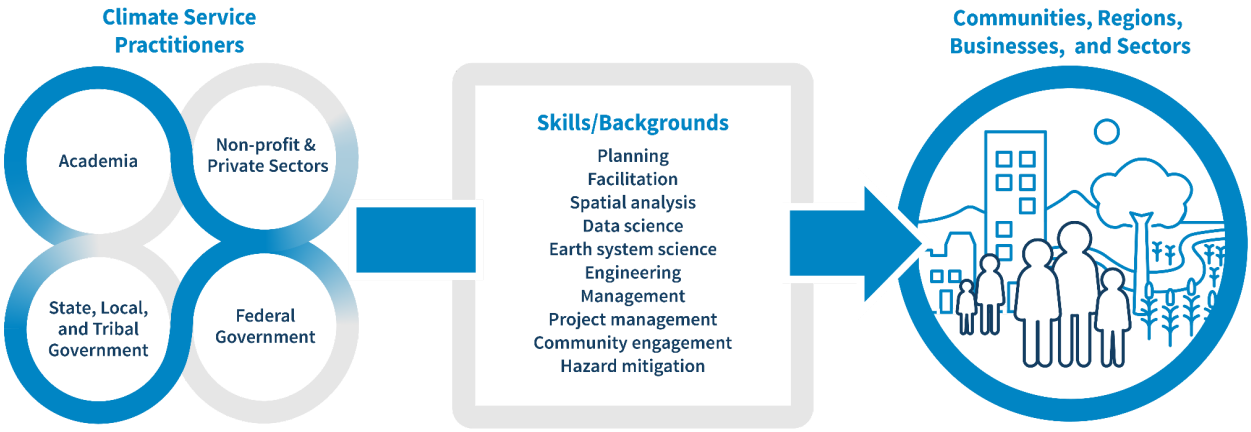


Figure 2. Climate service practitioners bring multiple skills to bear on serving communities, regions, industries, and sectors.

A climate service practitioner has or is able to leverage the following skills, getting assistance as necessary and incorporating relevant climate information into the needs of a specific community, region, business, or sector:

- Read, understand, and interpret climate science literature.
- Work with a planning team and facilitate a process using principles of equity and inclusion.
- Use spatial data and information.
- Work with communities to understand concerns and determine requirements that define vulnerability, risk, and potential impacts from climate-related impacts.
- Access and understand relevant solutions to problems, working with subject matter experts in many domains.
- Develop equitable, finance-ready resilience plans by focusing on the data, methods, tools, and governance structures that can be replicated, compared, and improved quickly.
- Using appropriate partnerships, tools, and resources suited to your work program, incorporate an understanding of exposure, vulnerability, and risk to climate-related impacts while designing and implementing potential actions to enhance climate resilience. See the Steps to Resilience framework for context and details. (https://toolkit.climate.gov/steps-to-resilience/steps-resilience-overview).

We encourage applicants to collaborate with, as strategic partner(s), NOAA-affiliated entities, which include NOAA offices, labs, cooperative institutes, personnel, and programs that implement NOAA climate resilience priorities (https://toolkit.climate.gov/content/resources-climate-ready-workforce). NOAA Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal experts and other employees can serve as uncompensated strategic partners or co-Leads on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities, or equipment to applicants, but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use.

If the project location includes areas that are served by NOAA's Sea Grant College programs, National Estuarine Research Reserves, the National Coastal Zone Management Program, and/or NOAA's Climate Adaptation Partnerships (CAP, formerly known as Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments, or RISA), applicants are encouraged to consider involving representatives from these programs as project advisors or strategic partners. Applicants can locate their local/regional NOAA resilience expertise, as well as other non-NOAA experts at https://toolkit.climate.gov/help/partners.

Applicants or partners could be existing AmeriCorps or Corps Network members or other organizations that offer paid training, career skills development, and/or job pathways into climate resilience careers. We encourage projects that can also implement elements of the proposed Civilian Climate Corps Initiative (Exec Order No. 14008, see https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/).

4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility

NOAA is committed to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. NOAA champions diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) by recruiting, retaining, and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal states and territories. NOAA encourages applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status to apply for this opportunity.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements for this competition. However, cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support will make projects more competitive. Applicants are encouraged to combine this NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions or informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. Informal leveraging includes resources that are not committed as part of the formal cooperative agreement, but which are brought to bear on the project in other ways, for example employer commitments, staff time or volunteer hours. Community, government, academic, non-government, and industry participation/involvement in projects is encouraged through cost sharing, leveraged funds, and/or in-kind support.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

All submissions under this NOFO are subject to the below review process.

An applicant must submit both a letter of intent and a complete application, as detailed in Section

IV.B. of this NOFO, to be considered for funding. NOAA may seek additional information or documentation from the applicant to clarify information presented in the application. NOAA also may, in its sole discretion, continue review of any application with minor defects or errors, while the applicant supplies the missing information. Please see Section V of this NOFO for more information on NOAA's review and selection process.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with NOAA using the contact information in Section VII to discuss whether their project is in alignment with NOAA's Program Priorities as well as NOAA's eligibility requirements, property standards, and other requirements outlined in this NOFO. This consultation is limited to clarification of technical matters involving the proposed project, project alignment with NOAA's mission and NOAA's Program Priorities, and all other relevant and publicly available information relating to general technical matters.

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available online and can be downloaded from www.grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007783. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

B. Content and Form of the Application

This section provides an overview of the required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

The applicant must redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to Grants.gov. PII that must be redacted from the application includes, but is not limited to, social security number, date of birth, student identification number (from transcripts) or other information which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

Required Elements:

1. **Letter of Intent Requirements**
   Applicants will be asked to submit a letter of intent (LOI) before a full proposal is submitted. Applicants that do not submit a LOI will not be eligible to submit a full proposal. Full proposals should not deviate greatly from the LOI. However, LOIs are not wholly binding, and the applicant may alter details of their project before submitting the full proposal as their plan evolves. LOIs are meant to provide NOAA with metrics on the scope and size of the application pool to assist with reviewer recruitment and review event planning.

   The letter of intent should be no longer than 3 pages and must include:
   a. Working project title
   b. Lead Applicant Name(s)

c. Lead Applicant Position(s) and Affiliation(s)
d. Lead Applicant Contact Information
e. Climate Service Practitioner Name(s)
f. Climate Service Practitioner Position(s) and Affiliation(s)
g. Climate Service Practitioner Contact Information
h. Number of phases to be completed within the scope of the project
i. The approximate funding to be requested
j. Brief discussion of the partnership, its approach, and its impact.
    i. Identify the region/community in which the work will take place to the county-equivalent level by Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) code. Applicants should use the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to identify geographically located disadvantaged communities that will benefit from this program (https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/; https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf).
    ii. Identify the sectors that will be supported through this project and how they connect to climate resilience
    iii. Address how the proposal will transform workforce capacity.
k. Table of potential partners

The confirmed submission of an LOI is all that is required to submit a full proposal. While applicants should not expect feedback on their LOI, NOAA program staff may provide it, subject to their capacity at time of submission.

2. **Full Proposal Requirements** (please also see **VIII. Other Information** for additional post-application required elements for submission):

    a. **Project Narrative**

    A Project Narrative of no more than 15 total pages. Material beyond the 15th page will not be read or considered. Application materials must be in a format and font sufficient to be easily read by NOAA staff and reviewers; if they are not readable, they will be rejected. Applicants should provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project, including a clearly defined regional workforce need or gap related to climate resilience, how the proposed project will uniquely meet that need, and the expected outcome(s) that will result from the proposed projects. Lengthy applications will not receive greater consideration.

    The Project Narrative must include the following documents in the following format:

        i. Section 1: Project Description and Overview

            - Section 1a: Provide an executive summary that includes a project title, identifies the partnership, and provides a summary of no more than 250 words.

- Section 1b: Identify and describe the Backbone Organization for the partnership (see Section III.A.1. for more details on the characteristics of a Backbone Organization).
- Section 1c: Identify what skills will be the focus of the training program and how those roles advance climate resilience.
- Section 1d: Identify which organizations or individuals will provide relevant climate resilience expertise to be incorporated into the program.

ii. Section 2: Partnership Structure and Commitments

- Section 2a: Employer Leadership and Commitments
    - Sector partnership success will be measured by how many good jobs training participants obtain with employer partners and their wages and wage growth. Any workforce project funded will clearly devise a method for ensuring employment for its participants.
    - Describe employer leadership and commitments already in place or that are anticipated to enhance climate resilience. If applicable, describe how the Backbone Organization will identify additional employers to participate in the partnership's work. Applicants applying for Program Design and/or Program Implementation funds should append documentation of the employer commitments to their applications (which will not count against the page limit).
    - Please explain how employers were or will be involved in the creation of the training programs and how they will participate in the implementation, evaluation, and ongoing refinement and improvement of them. Please also explain how employers were or will be active in the creation of recruitment requirements and the strategy for recruitment and/or the selection of training participants. Please also explain how entities that provide worker perspectives (e.g., labor unions, community organizations) will be involved in these activities. Applicants should include a summary table with data from the employer(s) that show the number of committed job placements.
- Section 2b: Strategic Partnerships: Describe all relevant groups for the system and/or partnership, including specific details on the roles and responsibilities of each participant. Provide a summary table for letters of support from core partners.

iii. Section 3: Regional Description

a. Section 3a: Provide a description of the project's location and region, including its primary service area to the county-equivalent level by Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) code, and the key industry or industries. Also include the most relevant and significant climate resilience skill needs in the target industries in the region. Additionally, include target participants served.

b. Section 3b: Address how the proposed development or strengthening of the partnership or system will be consistent with the region's or regions' economic development goals and climate resilience goals.

iv. Section 4: Impacts of the partnership

- Section 4a: Specify which one or more of the following components the project proposes:
    - Program Design to strengthen or expand an existing sector partnership(s) and/or create new sector partnership(s); or
    - Program Implementation to implement a sector partnership(s).
    - Describe partnership and how the proposed project will address local employers' workforce needs and advance climate resilience.
    - The applicant also should identify the factors that contribute to the region's workforce training strengths and challenges (e.g., workforce resources, existing and emerging industries, other regional assets).
- Section 4b: Explain how the proposed project would meet NOAA's Promoting Economic Development, and Centering Equity strategic goals in support of the agency's mission of science, service, and stewardship priorities. You also may explain in this space how the proposed project will meet any of NOAA's other Program Priorities.
- Section 4c: Describe the number and type of jobs expected to be available to workers who successfully complete the training, as well as the projected wages, wage growth, benefits, and/or union membership of those jobs. Discuss how you will leverage available resources to support partnership implementation. Include data that validate estimates provided or, if data are not yet available, describe how you will collect data to validate estimates provided.
- Section 4d: Explain why the proposed partnership is achievable. Do you have examples of where this or similar solutions have been implemented before? If the partnership is completely new, what research and groundwork have you done that leads you to believe

your outcomes are achievable?

- Section 4e: Describe the target demographics of participants and specific interested groups that will be impacted by the solution and explain the rationale for how participants are targeted. Provide an estimate of how many people, organizations, employers, and/or communities will be impacted by the project either directly or indirectly.

v. Section 5: Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

- Section 5a: Provide an estimated funding request for the proposed partnership(s) or system. As noted above in section I.A.2.a, NOAA plans to award funds under this NOFO in proportion to the proposed geographic, industry, and worker role coverage of a given regional system. While there are no maximums for any particular phase or combination of phases that can be requested, the following estimates can help guide your funding request. NOAA estimates:
  - Approximately $250,000-$2 million may be required for Program Design to design an employer-driven skills training program and make the capacity building investments necessary to enable its implementation, including securing the needed capital (e.g., equipment, leased space) per region, industry, and worker role.
  - Approximately between $250,000 and $8 million may be required for Program Implementation to implement an employer-driven skills training program per region, industry, and worker role. Proposals may be developed to serve multiple regions, industries, and worker roles.
    - Equipment costs, expenses related to securing adequate space
    - (e.g., rent, leases), and other non-construction capital expenses are allowable expenses under this program, provided they are sufficiently well-justified. Building-based construction projects (i.e., any activity that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure) are not eligible under this NOFO. Additionally, the use of project funds to make financial equity or hybrid investments in businesses is not an allowable cost; neither NOAA funds nor matching/cost-shares may be used for such purposes.
    - Applicants should include costs in their proposal to cover expenses to track and measure key metrics of their program. Expenses may include staff resources and systems. Metrics that will need to be tracked and reported shall include the following: number of workers

participating in program broken down by key demographics, number of workers who complete the program broken down by key demographics, number of workers placed into jobs broken down by key demographics, average wages of job placements, average wage growth of job placements, retention of workers placed, amount spent on wraparound services, and total average cost spent per worker.

- Section 5b. Describe anticipated program design and program implementation projects. Anticipated Program Design and program implementation projects should connect to the funding request under Section 5a. Depending on the needs of the region and the current status of existing workforce training efforts, these projects might include:
    - The development of outreach and recruitment plans for employers.
    - The development of outreach and recruitment plans for workers, including plans to reach diverse and underserved communities.
    - The development of training models and curricula.
    - Purchase of necessary equipment to support and expand existing workforce training projects.
    - Timeline for design and training
        - For successful applicants, NOAA expects training will begin within 12 months of the project start date.
- Section 5c. Identify any anticipated barriers to worker participation and how you plan to mitigate the impact of those barriers. Describe any wraparound services that will be provided to workers to ensure they are able to participate in employer-driven skills training programs and how you will ensure the program is sustainable, including any support provided to workers after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, subsequent professional development).

vi. Section 6: Sharing results and knowledge sharing

- Clearly describe what products will result from the project. This may include curricula, media, methods.
- Provide a clear plan for how results of this work will be transferable and shareable.
    - At a minimum, NOAA expects that results will contribute to the NOAA Climate Resilience Toolkit through submission to

- Additionally, recipients will be expected to share approaches, results, and challenges at an annual recipient conference to be convened by NOAA.

b. Professional Qualifications (does not count against page limit)

i. Include resumes for key personnel. Resumes should be no more than two pages each.

ii. Provide a summary of current or pending support to the applicant team.

c. Required supporting documents (does not count against page limit)

i. Letters of support from core partners

ii. Documentation of the employer commitments

d. Non-profit certifications (does not count against page limit)
If the Backbone Organization is a non-profit organization that is not an institution of higher education:

i. A copy of the organization's articles of incorporation,
ii. A copy of the organization's bylaws, and
iii. A current certificate of good standing.

e. <u>Optional</u> Supporting Documentation (does not count against page limit)
As noted above, NOAA recognizes that regions have different needs with respect to multi-sector regional workforce recruitment systems (i.e., one region may need to design and organize a system from the ground up, while another region may have an existing system). Therefore, applicants may (but are not required to) submit supporting documentation to appropriately supplement the Project Narrative. Such supporting documentation will not count against the Project Narrative page limit, but applicants should clearly label supporting documentation and make clear to NOAA which section of the Project Narrative any supporting documentation is designed to supplement. For instance, an applicant may (but is not required to) submit:

i. A memorandum of understanding or agreement (MOU or MOA) between the relevant groups to supplement Section 2 of the Project Narrative.
ii. A documented process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these skills training programs (e.g., past experience, sample training curriculum) to support Section 4 of the Project Narrative.
iii. Existing workforce training curricula to support Section 4 of the Project Narrative.

These examples are illustrative only; applicants may (but are not required to) submit other appropriate supporting documents as well.

f. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538; does not count against page limit)
This announcement is not seeking proposals that will have an environmental impact. Therefore, an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire is not required as part of the proposal.

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

h. Budget Narrative
The budget narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justification) in the following order and format. Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justifications must be included for each individual project within an application. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found at: https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf

i. **Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)**
Sea Grant 90-4 forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form should be completed for each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Years 1-4). The Sea Grant 90-4 form can be downloaded at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation

ii. **Budget Justification**
For each year of the project (or each individual project within an application), a budget justification is required. Each budget justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each budget justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 form, as appropriate.

iii. **Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)**
If indirect costs are included in the project budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate it is using (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). For most applicants, this will entail the submission of a copy of its current, approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA).

If the applicant does not have a current or pending NICRA, it may propose indirect costs in its budget; however, the applicant must prepare and submit an allocation

plan and rate proposal for approval within 90 days from the award start date (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). See 2 C.F.R. part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to NOAA's Office of Regional Affairs (or applicable cognizant Federal agency). If the applicant chooses to pursue this option, it should include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current or pending NICRA and will submit an allocation plan and rate proposal to NOAA or the applicant's cognizant Federal agency for approval.

In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), an applicant that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (unless the applicant is a state or local unit of government that receives less than $35 million in direct federal funding per year, discussed below). No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate; however, an applicant electing to charge a de minimis rate of 10

percent must include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

Note that if the applicant is a State or local unit of government that receives less than $35,000,000 in direct Federal funding per year it may submit any of the following:

- A Certificate of Indirect Costs from the Department of the Interior (DOI) or Economic Development Administration (EDA);
- Acknowledgment received from NOAA and Certificate of Indirect Costs in the form prescribed at 2 C.F.R. pt. 200, app. VII;
- Cost Allocation Plan approved by a Federal agency (note that cost allocation plans or indirect cost rates approved by state agencies are **not** acceptable); or
- NICRA.

i. Overall Application

In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov or on the Sea Grant website. These include:

i. **SF-424 Form** (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)

This form, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," must identify the entire funding period as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution's accurate UEI and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

ii. **SF-424A Form** (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006)

This form, titled "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs," must describe the entire funding period (broken out by year if multi-year) in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year with separate columns for each year of federal funding as well as each year of non-federal funding. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A form, Extra Section B should be used (see below). This form should be used to only document federal funding and concomitant official cost share. Do not use it for other forms of leveraged funds or in-kind support.

iii. **Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B** (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation, OMB Control No. 4060-0006)

The SF-424A form described above only includes space to report the applicant's yearly federal and non-federal dollars over two years. If the application includes more than

two years of federal and non-federal dollars, please complete the additional SF-424A, Extra Section B to report the yearly non-federal matching fund budget of the grant. This form should be used to only document federal funding and concomitant official cost share. Do not use it for other forms of leveraged funds or in-kind support. *This form is an outlier and will be added to the "Budget Narrative Attachment" section on Grants.gov, as described in Section IV. C. 2.*

iv. **SF-424B Assurances** (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007)
The form, titled "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

v. **CD-511** (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce)
The form, titled "Certification Regarding Lobbying," must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.

vi. **SF-LLL** (optional; Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046)
The form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee, if appropriate, such as if the applicant has retained a registered lobbyist in conjunction with the proposed project.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)
If this is your organization's first time applying for Federal Financial Assistance, this critical element can take a month or more (see section IX.A.) and is outside of NOAA's purview. Begin the SAM application process as soon as you think you might want to apply. If you have not applied recently, check on whether your SAM account is still active.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted 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:

1. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
2. Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and
3. 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.

A. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent must be received via email by the Competition Manager (sg.grants@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on **Thursday, November 30, 2023**.

Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by **11:59** p.m. Eastern time on **Tuesday, February 13, 2024**.

B. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the National Sea Grant College Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

C. Funding Restrictions

NOAA may allow up to 90-days pre-award spending. Applicants that need such reimbursement should work closely with NOAA to determine if their pre-award costs may be considered for reimbursement. For pre-award costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the applicant must competitively procure services pursuant to the Federal government's procurement procedures. All pre-award costs are incurred at an applicant's own risk and will be considered for reimbursement, in NOAA's sole discretion, only if an applicant receives an award and such costs are approved by NOAA in writing. Under no circumstances will NOAA be held responsible for application preparation expenditures, which are distinguished from pre-award project costs.

D. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

After NOAA reviews an application, NOAA may contact the applicant to request any necessary additional documentation to clarify or substantiate submitted application materials, depending on the type of project proposed. Examples of additional documentation may include, but are not limited to, title verification, documentation of the value of in-kind contributions, evidence that all funding is available and committed to the project, or documentation required for environmental or legal compliance. This additional documentation will be required to ensure the proposed project complies with all applicable rules and regulations prior to NOAA's issuance of an award. NOAA will provide applicants a reasonable amount of time to provide any additional documentation. Failure to provide complete and accurate supporting documentation in a timely manner when requested by NOAA may result in the denial of an application.

NOAA may, in its discretion, make changes or additions to this NOFO. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov.

V. Application Review Information

Throughout the review and selection process, NOAA reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed. NOAA may additionally ask applicants to

clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements. NOAA will screen submitted materials to verify that all required forms are complete, and all required documentation is included. Applications that do not contain all elements listed in Section IV.B. will not be reviewed.

A. Evaluation Criteria

All complete applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria below. Each criterion is worth 0-5 or 0-10 points. The applicant will be evaluated on plans for or the demonstration of:

a. **Overall Alignment with Priorities** (5 points) - The project's alignment with NOAA's Program Priorities.
    - Be consistent with NOAA's strategic focus to build climate resilient communities make equity central to our work, and accelerate economic growth in support of the agency's mission of science, service, and stewardship. (https://www.noaa.gov/organization/budget-finance-performance/value-to-society/noaa-fy22-26-strategic-plan)
    - Projects must support placement or promotion into good jobs that enhance climate resilience.
    - Work collaboratively to grow regional workforces and their associated economies by (a) co-developing new or (b) enhancing existing training programs that meet the existing and emerging skills needs of employers.
b. **Identification of Regional and Sectoral Needs** (5 points) – The application will be reviewed from a worker skills training perspective and based on how the project will address these needs, including:
    - Assessment of the region's economic state (e.g., level of distress, unemployment) and employer hiring needs (e.g., in-demand industries, vacancies, and worker roles);
    - Identification and justification of climate-resilience skills needed based on relevant current and projected climate impacts on economic, employer, and worker needs for the project;
    - Identification of specific, existing, or employer-projected needs by employers who are engaged in the sector partnership(s) or regional workforce recruitment system;
    - Proposed plan for how the project will address these needs by providing good jobs that enhance climate resilience.
c. **Proposed Approach** (10 points)
    - Partnership development, including the process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these climate resilience and related skills training programs.

- Training model and development specific to industries/sectors and worker roles related to climate resilience. If the proposal is for program design or program implementation, this evaluation will include the strength of the sector partnership or system.
- Skill-based hiring training for employers in the partnership/system.
- How the applicant proposes to leverage other funds and/or in-kind support.
- Worker and employer outreach and recruitment.
- Wraparound services to support worker participation in the skills training program.
- Measurement and tracking of outcomes and metrics.
- The likelihood that plans and forecasted workers served and job placements that enhance climate resilience will be completed in the grant period within budget.

d. Project costs (5 points)

- The budget is necessary and sufficient to carry out the project
- The costs per worker placed are reasonable and reflective of the time and expertise required to train them
- Costs for wraparound services are clear and reasonable

e. Climate Resilience Workforce Skills (10 points) – How well the proposed climate resilience skills determined by the applicant in their partnerships, will support climate resilience.

f. Backbone Organization's Capacity (10 points) – The applicant's ability to:

- Convene relevant groups: must submit commitment letters from relevant employers and strategic partners in the project and articulate what role they will fill, including executive sponsorship.
- Incorporate climate resilience information: must demonstrate the ability to use the best-available climate science and resilience principles in the context of the proposed project, all in alignment with the Steps to Resilience (https://toolkit.climate.gov/#steps).
- Establish a track record of success: provide documented evidence (including data describing outcomes) of coordinating across sectors/partners and driving them to action.
- Show capacity to leverage other funds or in-kind support: outline plan to leverage and administer other funds or in-kind support for the proposed project.
- Demonstrate past fundraising experience.
- Reach underserved and under-resourced communities: outline plan to reach a diverse set of underserved and under-resourced workers, as well as past outreach, recruiting, and service experience.
- Provide adequate staff support: describe staffing plan and include biographies for essential team members and their associated roles for

the proposed project.

g. **Employer Partnerships** (10 points) – Employer partnerships secured or plans to secure employer partnerships that address climate resilience concerns in a region, sector, or community and lead to good job placements that enhance climate resilience in those identified priority areas. Provide details on
    - The type of training program they are building,
    - What employers will be committing to the partnership/system (e.g., skills needs data, job placement commitments)
    - What benefits they will receive from the partnership/system (e.g., skills-based hiring training, access to qualified workers, portable industry-recognized credentials, earn and learn training).

h. **Employer Commitments** (10 points) - The number and quality of employer commitments in the context of the stage of development of the partnership.
    - Quality of commitment letters from employers (e.g. specificity, scope, certainty)
    - Likelihood of actual hires resulting from the commitment
    - Plans to secure additional employer commitments, if appropriate

i. **Job Placements Expected** (10 points) – Expected number of workers served, job placements or promotions during grant period (based on partnerships with community-based organizations, worker-serving organizations, and employers).
    - Projected number of individuals recruited for the training program(s) with target demographic breakdown.
    - Projected number of good job placements or promotions and how many are committed by employers.
    - Time from award to initial job placements.
    - Details about the jobs that employers are committing to hire or promote workers (e.g., key responsibilities, wages, benefits, union membership).
    - Projected training cost per worker (inclusive of provision of wraparound services).
    - Evidence of durability of job placements or promotions.

j. **Strategic Partnerships** (10 points) - The development and strength of other partnerships essential for the project to succeed. Examples include:
    - NOAA partnerships, including NOAA-funded organizations. Where possible, NOAA intends to augment NOAA's Digital Coast (https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/) with training that can be replicated and shared with other sectors and regions. In addition, NOAA will seek to expand the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit (https://toolkit.noaa.gov) so that others may learn from and apply lessons learned from successful projects.
    - Non-NOAA government partners
    - Institutions of higher education, especially including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, other Minority-Serving Institutions, or community colleges.

- Other groups, as appropriate, such as AmeriCorps or the Corps Network

k. Co-Investment and Sustainability (10 points)

- Availability and commitment of funds such as:
  - State and local government
  - Philanthropy
  - Industry
  - Other sources of investments to support the ongoing sustainability of the partnership/system after the lifecycle of the grant
- The amount of local leverage that will augment the federal award
- The project's alignment with and integration into other public or private investments currently ongoing or planned for the community and region.
- Sustainability also includes the applicant's plan for providing ongoing support for participants after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, subsequent professional development).
- Size of credibly projected income gains for workers and number of new good jobs or promotions.
- Commitment by community-based organization to sustain the work of the partnership.

l. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (10 points) – The strength of the application's plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared among affected communities, employers, and workers.

- This includes the extent to which the application demonstrates the ability to serve trainees that benefit from federal and state programs like SNAP, TANF, and WIC.
- NOAA heavily weights efforts to meaningfully engage the affected public, as evidenced by broad public engagement. Such engagement may include but is not limited to historically underserved populations and areas, such as:
  - Communities of color, including: Black, Latino, Indigenous and/or Native American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and other person of color
  - Women
  - Disconnected youth
  - Members of religious minorities
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
  - Veterans
  - Military spouses
  - Persons with disabilities
  - Persons in recovery
  - Persons with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants

- Persons who live in rural areas
- Persons adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review.

All complete applications will be reviewed by at least three individuals and scored against the Evaluation Review criteria above. NOAA anticipates funding approximately 10 to 20 awards to the highest scoring projects after application of selection factors described in Section V.C below.

The proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will also be reviewed by the program manager to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions.

The NOAA staff may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the merit or administrative correctness of the application, and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

- Availability of funding.
- Balance/distribution of funds:
    - geographically
    - by type of institution
    - by type of partners and/or sectors
    - by project types
    - Whether the project will advance the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of these investments flow to Justice40 communities, as identified by the CEJST (https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/; https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf).
- Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.
- Program priorities and policy factors.
- Applicant's prior award performance.
- Partnerships with and/or participation of targeted groups.
- Timeline for placing workers in good jobs.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Applicants

may be asked to answer questions, and/or modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets (including overall funding level) to address the issues raised by the reviewers, the competition manager, the Selecting Official, or the Grants Officer before an award is made. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be announced in June 2024 and start no earlier than August 1, 2024.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification when 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, signed by the NOAA grants officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the authorizing official and the lead of the project electronically. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected. Anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be available to all applicants by request, regardless of whether they were selected to be funded.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(1) Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements For Grants And Cooperative Agreements - The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.
(2) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements - Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

(3) Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's granting system and is also available at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/external_links.html , as well as https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20C onditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf

(4) Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. 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.

(5) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA Federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the White House 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.

(6) 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.

(7) Data Sharing Plan - 1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine- readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. 2. Proposals submitted in response to

this Announcement must include a data management plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The data management plan should be aligned with the data management guidance provided by NOAA in the announcement. The contents of the data management plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. 3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the data management plan from funded proposals, or use information from the data management plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

(8) Indirect Cost 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 Modified Total Direct Cost (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. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the MTDC base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements.
The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

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

(10) 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.

(11) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy - 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: https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Mar/1330-52.222-70%20NOAA%20Sexual%20Assault%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment%20Prevention%20and%20Response%20Policy%20%28except%20for%20services%20for%20the%20use%20of%20a%20vessel%29%20%281%2 9.pdf.

C. Reporting

1. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports
   All recipients are required to submit financial, progress, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award, generally no less than semi-annually. All project progress and financial reports must be submitted to the applicable NOAA program officer in an electronic format to be determined at the time of award.

2. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006
   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 $30,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170.

3. Government Performance and Results Act

   a. Internal NOAA Evaluation: As a condition of the grant award, NOAA will require additional data on activities, outputs, and actual impact of the funded investment, in part to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). NOAA anticipates that recipients will be expected to track their engagement activities within the scope of work, with project beneficiaries, and other project relevant groups. NOAA further anticipates

recipients will be expected to collect data, using surveys of beneficiaries or clients if necessary, on the outputs and outcomes of their activities, such as the number of new employer partnerships formed, or the number of workers placed.

b. Third Party Evaluation: As a condition of a grant award, grantees are required to participate in a NOAA-funded third-party evaluation, if undertaken by NOAA. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcome analysis of all or selected sites/components within or across grantees, and/or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive/have received program services or into control group(s) that would not/has not received program services or program services). NOAA may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to:

   i. make records available to an evaluation contractor or contractors on participants, employers, and funding;
   ii. provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and
   iii. in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and
   iv. follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor(s) under the direction of NOAA.

VII. Agency Contacts

The National Sea Grant Office mailing address is:

NOAA Sea Grant

1315 East-West
Highway Silver Spring,
MD 20910
sg.grants@noaa.gov

NOAA's website at www.noaa.gov provides additional information on NOAA and its programs.

VIII. Other Information

A. Applicant Webinar

Potential applicants are encouraged to check Sea Grant's national website at

https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding for information about a webinar and other resources related to this announcement.

B. Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

C. Right to Use Information

The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt. 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.

D. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

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. 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.

E. Non-Guarantee of Funding

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 direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

F. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by NOAA (or any of its operating units) and may be considered grounds for any or all the following actions:

a. Establishing an account receivable;

b. Withholding payments to the recipient under any NOAA award(s);

c. Changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only;

d. Imposing other specific award conditions;

e. Suspending any active NOAA award(s); and

f. Terminating any active NOAA award(s).

G. Certifications Required by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over $5 Million

a. As discussed in section IV.C, all applicants are required to be registered in SAM before applying under this NOFO. SAM requires registering entities to certify compliance with all limitations imposed by annual appropriation acts. For corporations, this certification includes that the corporation:

   i. Was not convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; and/or

   ii. Does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

b. For financial assistance awards in excess of $5 million, this certification includes

that the entity:

i. To the best of its knowledge and belief, has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification;

ii. Has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and/or

iii. Has not been notified, more than 90 days prior to certification, of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding.

H. Non-Relocation Specific Award Condition

For the purposes of this NOFO, if an application is selected for award, the recipient will be required to adhere to a specific award condition relating to the following non-relocation policy as follows:

a. In signing this award of financial assistance, Recipient(s) attests that NOAA funding is not intended by the Recipient to assist its efforts to induce the relocation of existing jobs within the U.S. that are located outside of its jurisdiction to within its jurisdiction in competition with other U.S. jurisdictions for those same jobs. If NOAA determines that its assistance was used for those purposes, NOAA retains the right to pursue appropriate enforcement action in accord with the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Award, including suspension of disbursements and termination of the award for convenience or material noncompliance, which may include the establishment of a debt requiring the Recipient to reimburse NOAA.

b. For purposes of ensuring that NOAA assistance will not be used to merely transfer jobs from one location in the United States to another, each applicant must inform NOAA of all employers that constitute primary beneficiaries of the project assisted by NOAA. NOAA will consider an employer to be a "primary beneficiary" if the employer is specifically named in the application as benefitting from the project, and the applicant estimates that the employer will create or promote 50 or more permanent jobs as a result of the investment assistance (if the jobs in question were originally located in a smaller community, NOAA may extend this policy to the relocation of 25 or more jobs).

I. Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the Uniform Guidance (see 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements"). The Uniform Guidance requires any non-Federal entity (i.e., non-profit organizations, including non-profit institutions of higher education and hospitals, States, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends Federal awards of $750,000 or more in the

recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Uniform Guidance.

J. Non-Discrimination and Equal Access by Those with Past Criminal Histories

Consistent with certifications made during the SAM registration process, grant recipients must administer skills training programs funded under this NOFO in compliance with Federal statutes related to non-discrimination. Further, recipients must not discriminate against participants in skills training programs funded under this NOFO with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants.

K. Demographics Information:

NOAA will not provide collected demographics information of applicants to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.

i. Please provide the following anonymous information for all named collaborators on your proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035) You may use this optional form for collecting the information.

ii. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? Check all that apply.

A. Black
B. Latino
C. Indigenous and/or Native American
D. Asian American
E. Pacific Islander
F. Other person of color
G. Members of religious minorities
H. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
I. Persons with disabilities
J. Persons who live in rural areas
K. Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
L. No, I do not identify with any of these groups

IX. Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov

The most up-to-date instructions for application submission via Grants.gov can be found at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html. To begin, complete, and submit your application:

- Navigate to https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html;
- Click "Search for Opportunity Package";

- In the "Funding Opportunity Number" field, enter "NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007783";
- Click "Search";
- Click "Apply";
- Enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates from Grants.gov regarding this grant opportunity) or check the box that indicates you do not wish to provide it, then click "Submit";
- Choose to apply using Workspace by clicking "Login to Apply Now" or choose to download the legacy application package by clicking "Download Package"; and
- Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.

A. Register Early and Submit Early.

In order to submit an application through http://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov), an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between **three to five business days** or **as long as four weeks** if all steps are not completed correctly. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html.

Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their System for Award Management (SAM), which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, registration up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

1. Pre-Submission Registration

Before submitting a Full Application under this NOFO, each applicant must both register with Grants.gov and register its Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) with Grants.gov. Applicants should note that this process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations not affiliated with NOAA, and requires confirmation at each step.

- Create a ***Grants.gov*** Username and Password
  - Same Day
- Obtain an ***EIN***
  - 10 Business Days
- Authorize the ***AOR***
  - Same Day (depending on your organization's EBiz POC)
- Register with ***SAM and obtain or verify your organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)***
  - 7-10 Business Days
  - https://www.sam.gov/
- Track ***AOR Status***
  - Same Day

Applicants may have already completed one or more of the steps set forth above (e.g., applicants may have already registered with Grants.gov, in which case they do not need to re-register). However, note

that applicants that have not completed any of the above steps may require 23 or more business days to complete the required steps serially**.** Grants.gov is a centrally-managed Federal grants portal, and changes or updates to the process outlined above may occur after the publication of this NOFO. Prospective applicants should visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html to ensure that they follow the most up-to-date instructions.

B. AOR Requirement

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at Grants.gov so please ensure that your organization's application is submitted by an AOR. **If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected by the Grants.gov system and cannot be considered by NOAA.** Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

C. Field Limitations and Special Characters

Please be advised that Grants.gov provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf 8-special-characters.html.

D. Verify That Your Submission Was Successful

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

An applicant should expect to receive two initial emails from Grants.gov: the first will confirm receipt of the application, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to NOAA or has been rejected due to errors. It can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error. Applicants will receive a third email once NOAA has retrieved their applications.

NOAA requests that applicants refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package.

Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that NOAA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact NOAA

using the contact information in Section VII to inquire if NOAA is in receipt of the applicant's submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, navigate to https://www.grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link under the "Applicants" tab. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov and an agency tracking number assigned. If your application has a status of "Received" it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. For more detailed information on why an application may be rejected, please see "Encountering Error Messages" at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html and "Frequently Asked Questions by Applicants" at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html.

E. Grants.gov System Issues

If you experience a Grants.gov system issue (i.e., a technical problem or glitch with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission in a timely manner, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726 for assistance; and (iii) contact NOAA using the contact information in section VII of this NOFO. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are **not** considered system issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to, e.g., (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message 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 itself, 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 reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format.

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," applicants may try contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on Federal holidays.