

## 2024 NOAA Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                        |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I. Funding Opportunity Description.....                                | 4  |
| A. Program Objective.....                                              | 4  |
| B. Program Priorities.....                                             | 14 |
| C. Program Authority.....                                              | 19 |
| II. Award Information.....                                             | 19 |
| A. Funding Availability.....                                           | 19 |
| B. Project/Award Period.....                                           | 20 |
| C. Type of Funding Instrument.....                                     | 20 |
| III. Eligibility Information.....                                      | 20 |
| A. Eligible Applicants.....                                            | 21 |
| B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.....                           | 21 |
| C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility.....                         | 21 |
| IV. Application and Submission Information.....                        | 21 |
| A. Address to Request Application Package.....                         | 21 |
| B. Content and Form of Application.....                                | 22 |
| C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)..... | 32 |
| D. Submission Dates and Times.....                                     | 33 |
| E. Intergovernmental Review.....                                       | 34 |
| F. Funding Restrictions.....                                           | 34 |
| G. Other Submission Requirements.....                                  | 35 |
| V. Application Review Information.....                                 | 36 |
| A. Evaluation Criteria.....                                            | 36 |
| B. Review and Selection Process.....                                   | 44 |
| C. Selection Factors.....                                              | 46 |
| D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates.....                       | 47 |
| VI. Award Administration Information.....                              | 47 |
| A. Award Notices.....                                                  | 47 |
| B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....                | 48 |
| C. Reporting.....                                                      | 51 |
| VII. Agency Contacts.....                                              | 52 |
| VIII. Other Information.....                                           | 52 |

## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: 2024 NOAA Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2024-2008196

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates: Electronic applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 29, 2024 to be considered for funding.

Applicants are required to apply online through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Use of Grants.gov requires an advanced registration process that may take a few days or several weeks.

A webinar outlining the required proposal elements and the review process will take place on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 from 3-4 pm CT / 4-5 pm ET (<https://meet.google.com/sus-teiu-fgg>) and on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, from 1-2 pm CT/ 2-3 pm ET (<https://meet.google.com/sus-teiu-fgg>). Please join the webinars at the Google Meet Video call links listed for each.

The Great Lakes B-WET Coordinator will be available to answer questions Monday through Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm ET excluding federal holidays.

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary office) is seeking proposals under the Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (Great Lakes B-WET) program: <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bwet/greatlakes/>.

The B-WET program is an environmental education program that promotes place-based experiential learning for K-12 students and related professional development for teachers. B-WET fosters the growth of new, innovative programs and encourages capacity-building and environmental education partnerships.

The primary delivery of B-WET is through competitive grants that promote Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). The MWEE is a learner-centered framework that

focuses on investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed action.

MWEEs are composed of multiple components that include both outdoor and classroom learning, and are designed to increase environmental literacy by actively engaging students in building knowledge and meaning through hands-on experiences. In these experiences, the core ideas of multiple disciplines are applied to make sense of the relationships between the natural world and society. MWEEs help connect students with their local environment and equip them to make decisions and take actions that contribute to stronger, sustainable, and equitable communities.

The FY24 Great Lakes B-WET funding announcement focuses on the following priority areas: 1) new projects that use the MWEE framework, 2) systemic MWEE implementation, and 3) capacity building for expanded statewide K-12 environmental literacy initiatives.

The Great Lakes B-WET program emphasizes our strong commitment to expanding the participation of marginalized communities in watershed education and is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities. And, the Great Lakes B-WET program suggests that the MWEE framework can directly foster climate knowledge, skills, and competencies to address climate change, climate impacts, and the opportunities to contribute to climate solutions in participant's own communities. Therefore, the B-WET program also strongly encourages the purposeful incorporation of education about climate change into programming.

For Great Lakes B-WET, applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, education projects must target students and teachers in the Great Lakes region. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Great Lakes region includes counties in the Great Lakes watershed in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

## I. Funding Opportunity Description

## A. Program Objective

## a. Overview

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

The K-12 education system is a well-positioned venue for instilling comprehensive knowledge, skills, competencies, and resilience around the most pressing economic, social and environmental issue of today: climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, <https://www.ipcc.ch/>) and National Climate Assessment (NCA, 2018, <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>), communities in the U.S. are experiencing changes in climate that are resulting in severe storms, flooding, hurricanes, extended drought, change in ocean chemistry and sea level rise, presenting growing challenges to human health and safety, quality of life, and the rate of economic growth. Currently, educational institutions, researchers and policy makers are calling for climate change education that goes beyond knowledge acquisition and formal classroom teaching to efforts that reach audiences of all demographics and incorporate the social, political, economic, and justice elements of climate change. Education has the power to help students develop meaningful personal connections to climate solutions, a sense of personal agency and empowerment, and ultimately impact their behaviors and decision-making in relation to climate change (Kwauk, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unleashing-the-creativity-of-teachers-and-students-to-combat-climate-change-an-opportunity-for-global-leadership/>; K12 Climate Action Commission, 2021, <https://www.thisisplaneted.org/blog/climate-action-plan-2021>). The MWEE educational framework can directly foster climate knowledge, skills, and competencies to address climate change, climate impacts, and the opportunities to contribute to climate solutions in their own communities. Therefore, the B-WET program strongly encourages the purposeful incorporation of education about climate change into programming.

In order to be effective, sustainable, and equitable, environmental education must be integrated within organizations that understand and support the needs of their community. In addition, challenges like climate change will be felt disproportionately by historically marginalized groups, particularly students of color and students from low-income families that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts. Therefore, the NOAA B-WET program is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities. Projects are strongly encouraged to develop meaningful and mutually-beneficial partnerships that honor the strengths of community organizations. In successful partnerships, organizations have shared goals and work together to share resources, communicate effectively, collaborate on decision-making, and competently engage members of diverse cultures and expertise. Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project. Applicants are encouraged to apply NAAEE's Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence in developing their project plans for engagement of target audiences (NAAEE 2017; [https://dg56ycbvljkqr.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/eeopro-post-files/community\\_engagement\\_guidelines.pdf](https://dg56ycbvljkqr.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/eeopro-post-files/community_engagement_guidelines.pdf))

b. Defining Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET)

B-WET was established in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and currently exists in seven regions: California, Chesapeake Bay, Hawaii, Gulf of Mexico, New England, Pacific Northwest, and Great Lakes. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries coordinates four of the seven B-WET regions. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater areas encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.

The Great Lakes B-WET region was established in 2011 with funding for awards provided by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (<https://www.glri.us/>). The program is managed by NOAA's Office of Education and Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 2000 as the first national marine sanctuary in the Great Lakes. It encompasses 4,300 square miles off the Michigan coast in Lake Huron, and protects a significant collection of historic shipwrecks (<https://thunderbay.noaa.gov/>).

The Great Lakes B-WET program supports grantee capacity building and connects grantees

to local NOAA assets and relevant STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) expertise, while being responsive to local education and environmental priorities. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Great Lakes region is defined as counties in the Great Lakes watershed in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, stimulating discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET program, have been shown to increase interest in STEM, thus contributing to NOAA's obligations under the America Competes Act (33 USC 893a(a)).

#### c. Defining the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE)

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

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

MWEEs are appropriate for all grade levels with content and practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades — starting with teacher-guided investigations and progressing to student-led inquiry. Using the MWEE framework helps educators create an engaging program to achieve their learning objectives (i.e., the

knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should be able to exhibit following instruction). Learning objectives should address academic standards, but might also include other objectives, such as teamwork, social-emotional learning, and civic responsibility.

## 1. MWEE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

### 1.1 Issue Definition

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

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

### 1.2 Outdoor Field Experiences

Students participate in multiple Outdoor Field Experiences to explore the driving question and strengthen their connection to the natural world. Within appropriate safety guidelines, students are actively involved in planning and conducting the field investigations, including developing supporting questions to explore the driving question in the field. Field experiences allow students to interact with their local environment and contribute to learning

in ways that traditional classroom or laboratory settings may not. During field experiences, students can use their senses, scientific equipment, and technology to make observations, collect data or measurements, and conduct experiments necessary to answer their supporting questions and inform environmental action. Students who have opportunities to learn in, thrive in, and appreciate the outdoors can become informed and engaged champions for our natural resources.

Outdoor Field Experiences can take place on school grounds or at locations close to schools, such as streams or local parks. They can also take place at off-site locations such as state or national parks, wildlife refuges, marine protected areas, or nature centers that are often staffed by experts and may provide access to field equipment and facilities. A range of partners, including environmental educators, natural resource professionals, or trained volunteers, can help facilitate field experiences; however, they should be co-developed and co-taught with teachers so that field experiences support learning objectives. Teachers and partners should ensure an accessible outdoor learning environment for all participants, including students with a range of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social abilities. They should also prepare students by providing information and discussing what students can expect to see, feel, or experience during their time outdoors to ensure students feel safe and comfortable during their field experiences.

### 1.3 Synthesis and Conclusions

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

### 1.4 Environmental Action Projects

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

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

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

>Everyday Choices: actions that reduce human impacts on watersheds and related ecosystems and offer ways to live more sustainably. Examples include: refuse/reduce/reuse/recycle; monitor and save water in the face of potential drought or reduction in water availability; compost food or yard waste; research and implement energy efficient strategies or energy alternatives at school and/or at home.

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

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

## 2. MWEE SUPPORTING PRACTICES

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

## 2.1 Teacher Facilitation

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

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

## 2.2 Learning Integration

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

## 2.3 Sustained Experience

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

period or field experience, that lesson or experience should be explicitly connected to the larger learning sequence of the MWEE.

## 2.4 Local Context

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

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

## 3. TEACHER MWEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Professional development providers play a crucial role in preparing teachers to implement successful MWEEs with their students. Professional development that includes characteristics such as: relevant content; explicit modeling of educational frameworks; collaboration, feedback and modeling instruction such as student-centered teaching; adequate time for professional development including time for ongoing support; and offering participation incentives that teachers value leads to a variety of positive outcomes.

Professional development should empower teachers to confidently and competently use the MWEE framework to support standards-based learning that aligns with local education agency initiatives. Teachers should gain confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will be able to implement MWEEs after the professional development has ended. To set teachers up for success, the following six overarching characteristics, informed by education research and evaluation results, are recommended for inclusion in professional development to support teachers implementing MWEEs.

### 3.1 Increases teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues

Professional development facilitators should ensure that teachers have an adequate level of content knowledge in science and specific to their grade level and discipline to support their MWEE. The content knowledge should also be connected to the interactions between natural systems and social systems, including human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth

systems. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions about the environment, teachers must also experience and build skills that enable them to address these traditionally non-academic factors in their classrooms. When combined, this knowledge and these experiences often result in teachers who are more aware of, and more prepared for, the complexity of implementing MWEEs.

### 3.2 Models MWEE framework

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

### 3.3 Includes collaboration, feedback, and models high-quality instruction

Effective professional development includes peer collaboration, time for teachers to experience, plan for, and practice model activities and lesson plans, and opportunities for reflection and feedback. Collaborative opportunities that include observing effective teaching practices and replicating these practices with expert instruction and feedback, can result in higher likelihood that teachers will apply these practices when implementing MWEEs. Such opportunities also foster exchanging ideas and create a collaborative atmosphere for changing the culture around adopting new teaching practices at multiple levels within a school system. In addition, when teachers experience high-quality instruction, such as active learning and student-centered inquiry, they are more likely to use high-quality instruction when implementing MWEEs with their own students.

### 3.4 Allows for adequate instructional time and ongoing support

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

of teachers from one particular school.

### 3.5 Offers appropriate incentives

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

### 3.6 Meets jurisdictional guidelines and engages leadership

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

## d. Resources for Implementing The MWEE

The following resources explain the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) and provide guidance on implementing a MWEE.

1. MWEE description: The full definition of the MWEE is provided online in an easy-to-use online format. <https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience>

2. NOAA MWEE resources: This website, <https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-resources>, provides links to resources that will help educators find the tools they need to implement student MWEEs. Resources here include: the MWEE definition, the MWEEs in action video series, MWEE implementation guides, student outcomes for environmental literacy, MWEE training courses, and an online resource that supports hand-on environmental learning titled Bay Backpack. Of special note is the new national guide, titled “An Educator’s Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE)”, found here: <https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-guide>

3. EPA's "How's My Waterway?" Tool: This tool provides watershed boundaries, definitions, and a comprehensive overview of water quality data and information with those boundaries. How's My Waterway? pulls in data from several sources with the goal of answering questions about aquatic life, eating fish, swimming, drinking water, restoration and protection. <https://mywaterway.epa.gov/>.

4. Tools for Implementing MWEEs on School Grounds: School Ground for Learning lists instructions and resources for 100+ educational green projects on school premises. <https://maeoe.org/environmental-literacy/school-grounds-for-learning>.

5. Great Lakes Literacy Assets: The Center for Great Lakes Literacy is a collaborative effort led by Sea Grant educators throughout the Great Lakes watershed. The website includes educational resources such as curriculum. <https://www.cgll.org/>

6. NOAA Assets: MWEEs use NOAA assets, such as data, resources, expertise, or places. NOAA has a wealth of applicable products, data, and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts who can enhance student experiences both in the classroom and in the field. These resources complement the educator's strengths and augment the educational resources. Additionally, NOAA personnel can serve as important role models for career choices and stewardship. For more on NOAA assets for education please see: <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections>, NOAA in your state (<https://www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/>), and NOAA in your backyard (<https://www.noaa.gov/education/noaa-in-your-backyard>).

For applicants seeking to address the Climate Change special interest area, NOAA provides data, tools, and information to understand and prepare for climate variability and change. Many resources exist that can support teachers and students including but not limited to: Climate.gov (<https://climate.gov/teaching>), the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit (<https://toolkit.climate.gov/>), Climate Explorer (<https://crt-climate-explorer.nemac.org/>). An additional list of relevant assets (<https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/elp/resilience-assets>) provide links to NOAA datasets, potential NOAA partners, and other resilience-related assets from federal and non-federal organizations.

## B. Program Priorities

### a. Great Lakes Basin Priorities

All projects must demonstrate a connection to the Great Lakes basin through the watershed system so that program participants understand how their actions can affect the Great Lakes ecosystem through their local watershed. Great Lakes B-WET awards are funded through

the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), and applicants must demonstrate how the project will “educate the next generation about the Great Lakes ecosystem.” (GLRI Action Plan III, Objective 5.1, <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-10/documents/glri-action-plan-3-201910-30pp.pdf>)

b. B-WET Priority Areas

Proposals must also address one of the following B-WET priority areas: 1) new projects that use the MWEE framework, 2) systemic MWEE implementation, 3) capacity building for expanded statewide K-12 environmental literacy initiatives. Each of these three B-WET priority areas are described below. Applicants must indicate which priority they are applying under.

1. New projects that use the MWEE framework:

The NOAA B-WET program seeks applications for projects not previously funded by Great Lakes B-WET that address all aspects of the MWEE as defined in Section I.A.c. Projects submitted under this area should address the specific activities that define MWEE Essential Elements, MWEE Supporting Practices, and Teacher MWEE Professional Development Practices.

2. Systemic MWEE Implementation:

The NOAA B-WET program seeks applications that develop and implement systemic MWEEs in school districts. Systemic projects reach the entire student population in one or more grades within a school district with teacher-supported MWEEs and ensure that the teachers of these students receive high quality professional development to give them the content knowledge and pedagogical skills for outdoor learning to support all aspects of the MWEE as defined in section I.A.c.

Systemic projects should have a 24-month project period. Projects that are systemic encourage ownership from a broad range of constituents and promote long-term sustainability of the MWEE project in a school district. These programs require leadership and support from the school district, however, because of the broad reach of systemic projects, partnerships with multiple partners are often required to ensure all students receive all components of a MWEE and meaningful professional development for teachers is provided.

For systemic projects, students should participate in all MWEE essential elements as defined

in section I.A.c (Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental Action Projects). Student MWEEs should be organized around a driving question that has students focus on a locally relevant environmental issue, problem, or phenomenon.

For systemic projects, teacher professional development should be offered for all teachers whose students will be engaged in MWEEs so they can support learning integration in the classroom. Projects should deliver training on both content and instruction outdoors, include year-long support for teachers, and include a plan for how teachers will be involved in implementing watershed education with their students. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources. Where appropriate, teacher professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds. Teacher professional development under this priority area should address all components of the MWEE as defined in section I.A.c.

For systemic projects, proposals should include details about where the project fits in the scope and sequence of the school district curriculum, and applicants should clearly understand and convey the primary learning objectives. Multi-disciplinary objectives are encouraged. Letters of support from curriculum supervisors and science, social studies, and other relevant subject coordinators at the district level can be effective in communicating such details.

Whenever possible, MWEEs should be embedded across an entire grade level or levels in a district, or be part of a broader systemic program in a school district to reach every student. For example, projects may reach only half of a grade level's teachers and students if the application includes documentation from the school district and other partners that the proposed project is a component of a larger systemic effort that reaches the entire grade level. If this is not feasible, applicants should explain why it is not feasible and how they will build toward systemic implementation over the course of the grant and into the future.

Applications for projects can come from any eligible applicant, however, substantial coordination and support from the school district is required. To document the appropriate level of support and engagement from school districts, official letters from superintendents, school boards, and/or school district curriculum supervisors are requested with applications.

### 3. Capacity building for expanded statewide K-12 Environmental Literacy Initiatives:

This priority supports projects that increase opportunities for advancing the MWEE and

environmental literacy at the state level. These capacity building projects will define the barriers to advancing environmental literacy at the state level and explain how the proposed work will fill a recognized gap. They will expand the ability to advance environmental literacy strategies and lay the foundation for sustainable and equitable environmental literacy, including MWEEs, at the state or multi-state level. Projects under this priority implement coordination, networking, leadership, and other support structures necessary for advancing the MWEE as an approach at the state or multi-state level.

Projects proposed under this priority area build capacity for statewide or multi-state K-12 environmental literacy initiatives. Increased capacity for environmental literacy efforts at this level creates opportunities for more and higher quality MWEEs in school districts. Projects in this priority area should create state-level frameworks, incentives, support systems, and/or drivers for environmental literacy to encourage or support systemic MWEE planning and implementation in local school districts. Projects should also seek to connect to existing education initiatives like Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programming, place-based or project-based learning, climate education, or other efforts/initiatives that already have momentum at the state-level. The proposed project should also look for opportunities to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, directly supporting authentic representation of these voices.

Examples of activities that may be funded under this priority include but are not limited to:

- >Developing a state-level environmental literacy strategy, plan, or framework.  
Creating a state-level environmental literacy advisory group to inform decision makers.
- >Expanding upon the work that has been started through regional networks to increase state-level communication across networks and organizations seeking to increase environmental literacy.
- >Building capacity for agencies, organizations, and collaboratives that are working statewide to modify or enhance existing programs that ultimately support systemic MWEEs.
- >Building a cadre of professionals (school district and/or non-formal learners) to work across the state to increase knowledge sharing and communication pathways to scale best practices for systemic and sustainable environmental literacy programming (aka “Network Weavers”) with an emphasis on reaching underrepresented communities.
- >Supporting and providing resources for key partners to elevate awareness of and the importance of environmental literacy among decision makers, including state boards of

education, superintendents, state department of education leadership, funders, and others who create policies, set standards of learning, and make funding decisions to support formal education (aka “Network Influencers”).

>Increasing the number of practitioners committed to advancing the MWEE framework with an emphasis on bringing new disciplines and perspectives to environmental literacy (aka “MWEE Ambassadors”).

Direct implementation of MWEEs for students should not occur in projects under this priority area, however, applications may include activities involving administrators, non-formal educators, teachers, and/or support staff such as those examples mentioned above.

### c. Special Interest Areas

Any proposal to this announcement must meet the Great Lakes regional priority and one of the single priority areas as described in the previous section. Additionally, NOAA also has a Special Interest Area, which is: Climate Education. More information on this special interest area is provided below. While applicants are not required to address a NOAA Special Interest Area, doing so will make applications more competitive.

The K-12 education system is a well-positioned venue for instilling comprehensive knowledge, skills, competencies, and resilience around the most pressing environmental issue of today: climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, communities in the U.S. are experiencing changes in climate that are resulting in severe storms, flooding, hurricanes, extended drought, change in ocean chemistry and sea level rise, presenting growing challenges to human health and safety, quality of life, and the rate of economic growth. Currently, educational institutions, researchers and policy makers are calling for climate change education that goes beyond knowledge acquisition and formal classroom teaching to efforts that reach audiences of all demographics and incorporate the social, political, economic, and justice elements of climate change. Education has the power to help students develop meaningful personal connections to climate solutions, a sense of personal agency and empowerment, and ultimately impact their behaviors and decision-making in relation to climate change (Kwauk, 2021 <https://www.brookings.edu/research/unleashing-the-creativity-of-teachers-and-students-to-combat-climate-change-an-opportunity-for-global-leadership/>; K12 Climate Action Commission, 2021 <https://www.k12climateaction.org/blog/climate-action-plan-2021>). The MWEE educational framework can directly foster climate knowledge, skills, and competencies to address climate change, climate impacts, and the opportunities to contribute to climate solutions in their own communities. Therefore, the B-WET program strongly

encourages the purposeful incorporation of education about climate change into programming.

### C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. § 893a(a), the America Competes Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

It is anticipated that approximately \$900,000 will be available in FY 2024 in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds. NOAA anticipates making approximately five to 12 new awards.

For applications to B-WET Priority 1, the total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed \$80,000. For priority area 2, the total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed \$150,000. For priority area 3, the total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed \$200,000. In all cases, the minimum Federal amount to request from NOAA is \$30,000. Awards will be made with one allotment of funding for the entire project period, which may extend up to 2 years.

Applications not funded in the current fiscal year may be considered for funding in the next fiscal year without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement. This alternative to developing another, new funding opportunity for FY25 acknowledges the great effort required by applicants to develop a strong application as well as the work required by the B-WET Program Office and reviewers to conduct panel reviews. If we select applications from this FY24 competition for possible funding in FY25, the standard practice of considering the remaining projects from this FY2024 solicitation in rank order, subject to the application of selection factors, will be followed.

The possibility of carrying the results of this competition over to FY 2025 depends on determining that the project applications received under this funding opportunity for FY

2024 funds remain relevant to NOAA priorities in the Great Lakes in FY 2025.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the Great Lakes B-WET competitive process are anticipated, but will depend on funding levels and resources available to support new projects.

#### B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2024. Awards will be made in a single allotment with an award period of up to 2 years. Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire award period. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. It is recommended to include the flexibility of the requested start date in your project description. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of a month, and project end date is always on the last day of a month.

#### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of collaboration, participation, or involvement of NOAA in the management of the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if the NOAA B-WET program shares responsibility for management, control, direction, or performance of the project with the recipient. Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Chapter 5.C of the Department of Commerce (DoC) Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, which is currently available at <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Grants%20%20Cooperative%20Agreements%20Manual%20%2820%20April%202021%29.pdf>. Specific terms regarding substantial involvement will be contained in special award conditions.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are: K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; institutions of higher education; nonprofit organizations; regional, state, or local government agencies; interstate agencies; and Indian tribal governments. For-profit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are not eligible to apply; however, for-profit and foreign organizations and foreign public entities may participate as a project partner with an eligible applicant. Additional guidance on sub-recipient partners can be found at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.331>. Likewise, Federal agencies are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement, but may serve as collaborative project partners and may contribute services in kind.

Applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, education projects must target teachers and/or students located in the Great Lakes region. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Great Lakes region is defined as counties in the Great Lakes watershed in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Consideration will be given to applicants who show prior experience in working in the Great Lakes region or who show prior experience with the environmental issues of the region.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program. Cost sharing is not considered in the evaluation criteria or selection factors.

#### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

### IV. Application and Submission Information

#### A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants should apply online through Grants.gov. If it is not feasible to apply online through Grants.gov, application packages may be requested from: Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET Program Coordinator, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary office, 500 W. Fletcher St., Alpena, MI 49707, (989) 312-3520, [amy.clark@noaa.gov](mailto:amy.clark@noaa.gov).

The NOAA Great Lakes B-WET Coordinator will be available to answer questions Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm ET excluding federal holidays.

## B. Content and Form of Application

Applications should follow the content and format described below. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the Great Lakes B-WET program or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

### a. Format Requirements

All pages should be single-spaced and should be composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper. The project description should not exceed 10 pages, exclusive of project summary (1-page), literature cited, budget information (including indirect cost rate documentation), resumes of investigators, letters of support, data management plan, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire, and federal forms. Any attachment included in an electronic application should meet the above format requirement when printed out. All documents submitted as electronic application elements should be PDF (rather than MS Word, Excel, MOV, or other file types).

### b. Content Requirements

1. Federal Forms: The following Federal Forms are required and must be submitted with applications with signatures of the authorized representative of the submitting organization. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.)

1.1 Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424

1.2 Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: SF-424A

1.3 Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B

1.4 Certifications Regarding Lobbying: CD-511

Additionally, the following Department of Commerce forms may be required:

1.5. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable, see instructions on form)

2. Project Summary (1-page limit): It is critical that the project summary accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all MWEE components and objectives of the activities. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read the summary and

grasp your plan. The project summary should include: organization title; principal investigator(s); address, telephone number, and email address of principal investigator(s); the B-WET priority area to be addressed as described in section I.B.b. (New projects that use the MWEE framework, Systemic MWEE implementation, or Capacity building for expanded statewide K-12 environmental literacy initiatives); the Great Lakes watershed connection to be addressed in section I.B.a.; the Special Interest area(s) addressed if any in section I.B.c.; project title; project duration (12 to 24 month project period starting on the first of a month and ending on the last day of a month, and not before August 1, 2024); project objectives; total federal funding requested (whole dollars only); voluntary cost-sharing to be provided from non-federal sources if any (match is not required for this funding opportunity and will not affect scoring); organization and partnerships (briefly describe your organization and list your key partners for this grant, if applicable); succinct description of work to be performed during the project period; audience description (describe the demographics of your audience including the state or region(s) and the number and types of participants you expect to reach, such as school district administrators, environmental educators, principals, etc.), and delivery methods to be used (e.g. workshops, field experiences, interactive programs, summer institutes, classroom outreach, planning meetings, webinars, etc.).

3. Project Description (10-page limit): The project description should describe and justify the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described in Section V. A. A high-quality project description includes specificity regarding the purpose of the project in plain language, project goals and milestones, expected deliverables and outcomes, activities to be performed, and intended beneficiary or target audiences.

3.1 Goals, Objectives, and Need: The project description should include the goals, objectives, and purpose of the project. Include information about the need of the target audience and schools to be reached. Include information about how the project contributes to great understanding and stewardship of the Great Lakes watershed and human elements. Describe the need for your project and cite timely studies or sources, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project.

3.2 Target audience and Contact Time: The project description should provide a discussion of the target audience(s) that will be served. Specifically, project descriptions should include a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served and the number of teachers and/or students to be reached each year of the proposed project. Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience, including anything that makes your target audience unique. Applicants should indicate whether the project will reach marginalized communities, particularly minority communities, or their students; describe the demographics and vulnerabilities of their target audience(s) and use data to support these assertions. Applicants

to B-WET priorities 1 or 2 should clearly show total anticipated contact time with project participants (teachers in professional development and students), and indicate how much of this time will be spent doing hands-on inquiry or engaging in action projects outdoors.

Regarding the time allocated for professional development, educational research findings and evidence from the B-WET national evaluation system support the B-WET program recommendation that professional development include more than 30 hours of professional development (for example, in-person multi-day workshops, virtual lectures or demonstrations, field-based data collection, one-on-one consultations), of which more than 10 hours should be spent doing hands-on inquiry and/or engaging in action projects in the outdoors. It has been shown that these targets will change teacher practice and increase the likelihood that teachers will implement impactful MWEs. Where states and/or school districts put limits on the amount of time teachers can spend in professional development, applicants should describe those limitations and how they will maximize the professional development time that is available.

**3.3 Alignment with National and Regional Principles:** Applicants should include information on how their project addressed one or more of the following:

>environmental literacy principles such as the Great Lakes Literacy (<https://www.cgll.org/principles/>) and/or the Climate Literacy ([http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/climate\\_literacy.pdf](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/climate_literacy.pdf)) principles and concepts.

> the goals of the NOAA Education strategic plan (<https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/2021-2040-noaa-education-strategic-plan>).

**3.4. Community-Based Partnerships that Lead with Equity:** In order to be effective, sustainable, and equitable, environmental education must be integrated within organizations that understand and support the needs of their community. In addition, challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change will be felt disproportionately by historically marginalized groups, particularly students of color and students from low-income families, that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts. Therefore, the NOAA B-WET Program is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities. Projects are strongly encouraged to develop meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships that honor the strengths of community organizations. In successful partnerships, organizations have shared goals and work together to share resources,

communicate effectively, collaborate on decision-making, and competently engage members of diverse cultures and expertise. Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project. Applicants are encouraged to apply NAAEE's Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence in developing their project plans for engagement of target audiences (NAAEE 2017).

Community partnerships may look different across proposals but may include: Organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities; Partnerships that help to address a watershed challenge, problem, or phenomenon by bringing in local expertise on existing environmental issues and creating innovative solutions; Partnerships that enhance the local context, cultural relevance, and cultural competence in professional development for all teachers.

3.5 Methods: Project descriptions should include a timeline of expected deliverables, outcomes, and milestones and should describe how the planned activities will address the project goals and objectives. Timelines should be included and should be detailed enough for reviewers to ascertain the number and duration of teacher and student contacts, and how much of this time will be spent outdoors.

For Priorities 1 and 2:

Project descriptions should outline the methods, activities to be performed, and approaches to be used to ensure the project implements each component of a MWEE (defined in section I.A.c.). Include specific approaches to achieving project objectives and expected outcomes. In addition, project descriptions should detail how the project will address the factors described in the selected B-WET priority area (section I.B.b.).

For Priority 3:

Project descriptions should describe how the project meaningfully advances environmental literacy activities related to environmental literacy planning and/or student MWEEs at the statewide level. Project descriptions should detail how the project will address the factors described in the selected B-WET priority area (section I.B.b.). It should define the barriers to advancing environmental literacy at the state level and explain how the proposed work will fill a recognized gap. It should detail how the project will result in one or more products that codify or support the long-term implementation of state environmental literacy strategies. Applicants should review existing resources available through NOAA, the state department of education, the state's NAAEE affiliate, and other relevant state-level

networks focused on environmental literacy and identify which resources will be used in this project.

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

### 3.7 Evaluation:

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

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

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

Proposals should provide a project-level evaluation plan for short-term outcomes. If your medium- and long-term outcomes can also be measured within the project period, explain your plans for that evaluation as well. The evaluation plan should include:

- > How will the evaluation be used and what do you hope to gain (e.g. information to determine the success of the project; information on how to improve the project's

effectiveness.)

> What will be evaluated (e.g. changes in participants' knowledge or attitudes related to watersheds)

> The type(s) of evaluation that is planned (e.g. needs assessment, formative evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, etc.)

> The methods for implementing the evaluation (e.g. what will be measured, how it will be measured, when will evaluation data be gathered, and how will results be analyzed and delivered?)

Resources for Project evaluation:

>B-WET Evaluation resources: <https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-resources>

> National Marine Sanctuaries Education Project Evaluation Guidance:  
<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html>

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

Additional information about B-WET national evaluation work is available here:  
<https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation>

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval - Some aspects of project evaluation may require institutional review board (IRB) approval. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine if this is necessary and report back to NOAA. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Human Research Protections website has resources to help you determine the necessity of IRB approval. You can find those resources at: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/decision-charts-2018/index.html>. As part of the project evaluation plan, applicants must provide, in writing, a description of whether

or not IRB review will be sought and a justification if not. If the applicant determines IRB review is necessary, the applicant must include a timeline for IRB review, and no expenditures related to data collection may occur until IRB approval has been obtained.

#### 4. Appendices: (Not included in the Project description 10-page count)

4.1 Literature Cited: If references are cited, applications should include a literature cited list.

4.2 Letters of Support: Letters of support from each partner that is making a significant contribution to the project should be included with the application. Applications should include partnerships with school divisions, the state department of education, or capacity building network partners (if the applicant is not one of these entities). Applicants should describe the nature and makeup of the proposed community-based partners (if the applicant is not one themselves), including the partners' expertise in competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming. See definition of community-based partnerships in Section IV.B.b.3. (3.4) Community-Based Partnerships that Lead with Equity.

4.3 Technical Experience, Qualifications, and Resumes: Applicants should provide a description of the applicant's ability to successfully implement and manage the proposed project including staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project, and your organizational experience and past history in performing tasks similar to the proposed project. Also include a paragraph describing qualifications of each of the key personnel and partner conducting the project, including justification for how the project team members possess the educational, scientific, and cultural expertise needed to carry out the project. Provide investigator resumes for the key personnel conducting the project (limit two pages per resume). Technical experience, qualifications, and resumes do not count against the 10-page Project Description page limit.

4.4 Data Management Plan: Data Management Plan: Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. This Data Management Plan does not count against the 10-page Project Description page limit. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the NOAA B-WET Data Management Guidance provided below and will be considered as part of proposal review. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. Proposal

submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional

Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

#### Data Management Guidance to Applicants:

The NOAA B-WET program has developed this guidance to help grant applicants plan to share quality environmental data collected as part of their B-WET funded projects, where applicable. Environmental Data are defined by NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 212-15: Management of Environmental Data and Information as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena (such as animal sounds or undersea video) are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are included in this definition, particularly if they are used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included in this definition.

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

Note that the Federal Program Officer may require revisions to the applicant's Data Management Plan prior to recommending the application for funding. Applicant Data Management Plans should be aligned with the following Data Management Guidance:

If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are primarily for education and/or the practice of making observations using scientific techniques/methods (e.g. measuring pH of water with a refractometer, measuring atmospheric humidity with a sling psychrometer, measuring percent vegetative cover using a transect, etc.) and are not intended

to be shared with scientists outside of the educational program, applicants may request permission not to make data publicly accessible and obtain approval from the Federal Program Officer, if funded. In this case, this element of the application should consist of a paragraph (under the heading Data Management Plan) describing the intended use of the data and that an exemption from data sharing is requested.

If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are for purposes beyond education and/or the practice of making observations using scientific techniques/methods, applicants should describe (up to 2 pages, under the heading Data Management Plan) how data will be shared, based on the following guidance:

**Contents:** A typical Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The plan should describe or reference the data quality control techniques that will be used or note that the data will not be quality controlled. Data that is not quality controlled should include a description on the limitations of the data or an indication of degree of uncertainty.

**Technical recommendations:** The NOAA B-WET program does not offer specific technical guidance. Applicants should describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

**Data Accessibility:** The NOAA B-WET program recommends that public access to grant produced data be enabled as follows: a) An existing publicly accessible online data server at the funded institution is to be used to host these data (describe in application) or; b) Data are to be submitted to a public data repository appropriate to this scientific domain (describe in application). (e.g. The GLOBE Program - <http://www.globe.gov/>, CoCoRaHS Community - <http://www.cocorahs.org/>); or c) Funding recipients will establish their own data hosting capability (please describe in application's Data Management Plan).

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

#### Questions Regarding This Guidance

Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET

Program Coordinator, sarah.a.waters@noaa.gov, (989) 312-3520.

4.5 NEPA: NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Consequently, if your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at the following link (<https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf>) and include it as an appendix to your application. Please see section VI.B.e. for information the NEPA section of the application. The NEPA responses do not count against the 10-page Project Description page limit.

#### 4.6 For Priority 2

Provide an Environmental Literacy Model (ELM) such as [https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/11\\_NOAA\\_BWET\\_MWEE\\_Environmental\\_Literacy\\_Model.pdf](https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/11_NOAA_BWET_MWEE_Environmental_Literacy_Model.pdf) or other document that illustrates how the proposed project will meet the full definition of the MWEE, including identifying curricular connections of the MWEE through academic standards, issue investigation where students engage in the essential elements of issue definition, outdoor field experiences, and synthesis and conclusions, and ultimately engage in informed action through a student-directed environmental action project. ELM does not count against the 10-page Project Description page limit.

Note: you may reference lesson plans or curriculum as part of the appendices but do not embed these resources into the proposal.

#### 5. Budget and Budget Justification:

In addition to the SF-424A Budget Information form, applicants should include a detailed budget justification, or budget narrative. Please list requested amounts in whole dollars. Applicants are encouraged to use the B-WET budget template found [https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-01/BWET\\_Budget\\_Template\\_21.xls?null](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-01/BWET_Budget_Template_21.xls?null). All budget information submitted with the application should mirror the dollar amounts on required SF-424 and SF-424A forms. The budget documentation does not count against the 10-page Project Description page limit.

The budget justification should explain the need for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested in relation to

the project description. To ensure equitable participation by community members, applicants are encouraged to include participant support costs (e.g., direct financial compensation, covering travel expenses and meals, providing lodging).

Grant recipients may be asked to attend a two to three-day conference during the award period. Your budget should include, in the travel category, estimated funds for this trip (such as meals, lodging, airfare and/or other transportation including rental car, shuttle, or taxi). Although this is considered an outreach and education opportunity, it should not be the sole justification to meet the outreach and education criteria; local, regional or national communication is required as well.

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs, which are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 C.F.R. 200.1 and 200.412-.415 at <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>. An applicant may also propose all allowable project charges as direct costs. An applicant requesting indirect costs should provide a current approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement established with its cognizant Federal agency or an acknowledgement letter from the cognizant agency to which the applicant has submitted a proposed rate. In addition, if an award recipient does not have a current indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimis rate described at 2 C.F.R. 200.414 or it may negotiate a new rate with the Department of Commerce. The negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by the NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, [https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%202012%20November%202020%20PDF\\_0.pdf](https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%202012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf), require that within 90 days of the award start date, recipients submit documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation, plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review to establish a new rate to: Michele Mazzocchi, [michele.mazzocchi@noaa.gov](mailto:michele.mazzocchi@noaa.gov).

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

As required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C.6101 note, to the extent applicable, any applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>.

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: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. A federal awarding agency 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 the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applicants should allow a minimum of thirty days to be registered in SAM. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

#### D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 29, 2024 to be considered for funding. Applications should be submitted through Grants.gov. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind that it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application and that an advance registration process is required that may take a few days or several weeks.

If Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission or use of Grants.gov is otherwise not feasible, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail or commercial delivery service. Mail hard copy applications to Sarah Waters, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, 500 W. Fletcher St., Alpena, MI 49707. Hard copy applications must be received (not postmarked) by the application deadline posted in this announcement of February 29, 2024. Hard copy applications arriving up to two business days after the deadline will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service that guaranteed delivery by the specified deadline.

Informational webinars about the FY 2024 Great Lakes B-WET funding announcement will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 from 3-4 pm CT / 4-5 pm ET (<https://meet.google.com/sus-teiu-fgg>), and on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 from 1-2 pm

CT / 2-3 pm ET (<https://meet.google.com/sus-teiu-fgg>). Please join the webinars at the Google Meet Video call links listed for each.

The Great Lakes B-WET Coordinator will be available to answer questions Monday through Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm ET excluding federal holidays.

#### E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

#### F. Funding Restrictions

a. Indirect Costs: If indirect costs are requested, indirect-cost-rate agreements must be included for the applicant organization. If an applicant does not have an indirect cost rate and wants to include indirect costs, the applicant has up to 90 days after the award start date to submit an indirect cost proposal or cost allocation plan. Indirect cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees.

Under 2 C.F.R. §200.414 Indirect (F&A) Costs, any applicant that does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.403 Factors affecting allowability of costs. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Michele Mazzocchi, [michele.mazzocchi@noaa.gov](mailto:michele.mazzocchi@noaa.gov).

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

c. Allowable Costs: All costs must be reasonable, allowable and allocable. Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying

out the project. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Requirements), found at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are necessary and reasonable.

#### G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov. Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Because first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks or more, it is strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their registration may need to be renewed prior to submitting to Grants.gov. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please consider these notes in developing your submission timeline.

If you experience Grants.gov technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before an applicable funding cycle deadline, please print any error message received; and call Grants.gov support at 800-518-4726 for assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered Grants.gov technical problems. Similarly, an applicant's failure to: complete the required registration, ensure that a registered Authorized Organization Representative submits the application, or receive an email message from Grants.gov are not considered Grants.gov technical problems. A Grants.gov technical problem occurs in connection with the operations of Grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed technical problem, NOAA may allow more time for applicant submission.

If Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission or use of Grants.gov is otherwise not feasible, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail or commercial delivery service. Mail hard copy applications to Sarah Waters, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, 500 W. Fletcher St., Alpena, MI 49707. Hard copy

applications must be received (not postmarked) by the application deadline posted in this announcement of February 29, 2024. Hard copy applications arriving up to two business days after the deadline will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service that guaranteed delivery by the specified deadline.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (20 points)
2. Technical merit (45 points)
3. Overall qualifications of applicants (15 points)
4. Project costs (15 points)
5. Outreach and education (5 points)

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion includes factors reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets that criterion. Applications that best address these criteria will be the most competitive. Guidance about each evaluation criterion follows:

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (20 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the NOAA Great Lakes B-WET program, this includes the following questions:

Priority 1 and 2:

>Project need (5 points): Does the applicant provide data that demonstrates that the schools to be served have indicators of need in academic performance (e.g. academic achievement, graduation rates, and attendance), socioeconomic status (e.g. low income, unemployment, high poverty, title 1 schools) and/or other areas that have shown to widen disparities in access to environmental education?

>Target audience (5 points): Does the applicant describe the target audience using specific demographics? Does the applicant target historically marginalized communities, students of color, student from low-income families, or those that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts? Does the applicant include data to justify and support their description of the targeted communities?

>Connection to the watershed (5 points): Does the project make a direct connection to the local watershed; and does it address how actions within that system can affect the environment? Does the applicant include information about how the project contributes to great understanding and stewardship of the Great Lakes watershed and ecosystem?

>Alignment with National and Regional Principles and Priorities (1 point): Does the applicant illustrate alignment with national and regional principles and priorities such as Great Lakes Literacy Principles, Climate Literacy Principles, and NOAA Education Strategic Plan goals?

>Special Interest Areas (4 points): Does the applicant address one or both of the stated Special Interest Areas defined in section I.B.c. - Climate Education and/or Communities that Lead with Equity.

#### Priority 3:

>Project need (5 points): Does the applicant provide data that demonstrates that the targeted state has a need to build capacity for statewide or multi-state K-12 environmental literacy initiatives?

>Target audience (5 points): Does the applicant describe the target audience for the capacity building efforts and the audience that will ultimately benefit from this work? Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the intended community, including an in depth understanding of current challenges and opportunities that school districts face in relation to environmental literacy? Does the applicant note how historically marginalized communities, students of color, students from low-income families, or those that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts will benefit from the proposed project?

>Barriers (5 points): Does the application clearly define the barriers to advancing environmental literacy at the state or multi-state level of the proposed project? Does the project aim to address one or more specific needs and will it fill a recognized gap within that

state/states?

>Alignment with National and Regional Principles and Priorities (2 point): Does the applicant illustrate alignment with national and regional principles and priorities such as Great Lakes Literacy Principles, Climate Literacy Principles, and NOAA Education Strategic Plan goals?

>Special Interest Areas (3 points): Does the applicant address the stated Special Interest Areas defined in section I.B.c. - Climate Education.

## 2. Technical/scientific merit (45 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Technical merit will be scored using the following measures:

Priority 1 and 2:

>Objectives (4 points): Are objectives identified in the application? Are they focused on reaching the stated outcomes(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives and outcomes can be reached within the proposed project period?

>Timeline with Milestones (4 points): Does the applicant include project milestones and a timeline for reaching each? Is the timeline reasonable for the award duration and components?

>NOAA Assets (4 points): Does the project use NOAA and partner assets including products, data, services, or scientific/professional experts in forming and implementing the MWEE?

>Evaluation (3 points): Does the applicant provide an effective project-level evaluation plan, appropriate to the maturity and scale of the project, to determine the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting the objectives, and inform decisions about future programming? Does the plan describe how the evaluation will be used? Does the plan define what will be evaluated and the types of evaluation planned? Are the methods for implementing the evaluation appropriate?

>Implementing the Components of the MWEE (30 points):

## Priority 1:

Does the application address the characteristics of teacher MWEE professional development and the MWEE essential elements for students? Specifically:

- Is the project likely to increase teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues? (2 points)
- Does the project require teachers to model the MWEE framework by allowing them to define a local watershed issue? (2 points)
- Does the project require teachers to model the MWEE framework by participating in outdoor field experiences? (2 points)
- Does the project require teachers to model the MWEE framework by synthesizing their results and drawing conclusions? (2 points)
- Does the project require teachers to model the MWEE framework by describing how teachers will be engaged in Environmental Action Projects during the professional development program? (2 points)
- Does the project include opportunity for collaboration, feedback, and high-quality instruction? Where appropriate, does the professional development include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds? (2 points)
- Does the project allow for adequate instructional time and ongoing support? (2 points)
- Does the project describe adequate incentives that support teachers' abilities to attend professional development activities? (2 points)
- Does the project meet jurisdictional guidelines and engage leadership? (2 points)
- Does the project guide students to identify a local environmental issue? (3 points)
- Does the project provide outdoor field experiences for students? (3 points)
- Does the project support students in synthesizing their results and drawing conclusions? (3 points)
- Does the proposal illustrate a pathway for students to complete environmental action projects as a result of their investigations? (3 points)

## Priority 2:

Does the application address the characteristics of Systemic teacher MWEE professional development and the MWEE essential elements for students? Specifically:

- Consistent with the definition of the MWEE defined in section I.A.c., does the application address the characteristics of teacher MWEE professional development? (8 points)
- Consistent with the definition of the MWEE defined in section I.A.c., does the application

address the MWEE essential elements for students? (8 points)

--Does the application develop and implement programming that reaches the entire teacher and student population in one or more grades within a district? (3 points)

--Is there demonstrated support from the school district leadership via official letters from superintendents, school boards, and/or school district curriculum supervisors? (3 points)

--Does the applicant clearly document that the proposed project is part of building or supporting a broader systemic program in a school district? (3 points)

-- d. Does the proposal demonstrate how B-WET MWEE resources such as the MWEE Guide (ELM planning tools and MWEE Audit tool), Facilitator's Guide to MWEE Training will be used in the project? (5 points)

Priority 3:

>Objectives (4 points): Are objectives identified in the application? Are they focused on reaching the stated outcomes(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives and outcomes can be reached within the proposed project period?

>Timeline with Milestones (4 points): Does the applicant include project milestones and a timeline for reaching each? Is the timeline reasonable for the award duration and components?

>NOAA Assets (4 points): Does the project use NOAA and partner assets including products, data, services, or scientific/professional experts in forming and implementing the project?

>Evaluation (3 points): Does the applicant provide an effective project-level evaluation plan, appropriate to the maturity and scale of the project, to determine the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting the objectives, and inform decisions about future programming? Does the plan describe how the evaluation will be used? Does the plan define what will be evaluated and the types of evaluation planned? Are the methods for implementing the evaluation appropriate?

>Environmental Literacy Capacity Building (30 points):

--Does the applicant anchor their project objectives within the context of the state environmental literacy interests, issues, and capacities? (5 points)

--Does the project meaningfully advance activities related to environmental literacy planning and/or student MWEES at the statewide level? Does the applicant describe how environmental literacy programming will be enhanced, state-wide, through the project? (5

points)

--Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the MWEE and its role in K-12 education and stewardship? (4 points)

--Does the applicant illustrate appropriate steps, mechanisms, and processes will be taken to execute the project? Is there sufficient detail about how these activities are connected to the stated objectives (e.g. duties of a funded position, contents of a plan or strategy, and/or function of a network)? (4 points)

--Does the project use best practices and/or innovative approaches (i.e. collective impact framework, network-building strategies, successful approaches from former capacity building efforts) to meet the stated goals? (4 points)

--Does the application demonstrate a firm understanding of desired outputs and outcomes that result in changes that support statewide environmental literacy (short-, mid-, and long-term)? (4 points)

--Will the project result in one or more products that codifies or supports the long-term implementation of state environmental literacy strategies? Does the application describe in what ways these project outputs help to establish a means to communicate priorities and practices across the state/states? (4 points)

### 3. Overall qualifications of applicants (15 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Overall qualifications of applicants will be scored using the following measures:

For Priority 1 and 2:

>Organizational Capacity (3 points): Has the applicant organization managed similar programs or grants (e.g. projects with similar funding source, dollar amounts, project team size, project duration, and audience size) or does the applicant justify the capacity of the project leads and organization to be well positioned to manage the proposed project?

>Knowledge of K-12 Landscape (3 points): Does the applicant show capability and experience in successfully completing similar K-12 projects? Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the Content Standards for their state? Does the applicant document collaboration with schools or school systems (if they are not such an organization)?

>Knowledge of Local Watershed (3 points)): Does the applicant show prior experience in working in the Great Lakes region, show prior experience with environmental issues of the Great Lakes region, or demonstrate partnerships with local organizations in the Great Lakes

region on proposed projects? Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of watershed issues?

>Content Expert Partners (3 points): Does the applicant describe the nature and makeup of the proposed partners and relate each partners' expertise to the objectives or elements of the proposed project? Did all subject matter expert partners needed to execute the proposed project (e.g. watershed and other subject matter experts, curriculum supervisors, school districts, etc.) provide letters of support?

>Community-based Partners (3 points): Are organizations with expertise in reaching marginalized communities such as community-based partners included and did they provide letters of participation? Does the applicant describe how the partners' expertise positions them to ensure equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities? Does the applicant describe their partners' qualifications and experience related to competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming?

For Priority 3:

>Organizational Capacity (4 points): Has the applicant organization managed similar programs or grants (e.g. projects with similar funding source, dollar amounts, project team size, project duration, and audience size) or does the applicant justify the capacity of the project leads and organization to be well positioned to manage the proposed project?

>Knowledge of State Environmental Literacy Landscape (4 points): Does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant and/or their partners have the educational, scientific, and cultural expertise to successfully complete this project? Is this clearly described in the resumes or narrative included in the application?

>Expert Partners (4 points): Does the applicant demonstrate a commitment to building relationships that reach beyond usual partners in environmental education? Were these partners meaningfully involved in the design of the project? Does the application include partnerships that contribute to project implementation, and are those partners documented with support letters detailing how they will support the project (as opposed to simply voicing support)? Does the applicant demonstrate that they have involved state-level representatives (e.g. department of education) in the project?

>Community-Based Partners (3 points): Are organizations with expertise in reaching

marginalized communities such as community-based partners include and did they provide letters of participation? Are partners involved that will focus on ensuring equity while working to meet the unique needs of their state? Does the applicant describe how the partners' expertise positions them to ensure equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities? Does the applicant describe their partners' qualifications and experience related to competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming?

#### 4. Project costs (15 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Project costs will be scored using the following measures:

##### Priority 1 and 2:

>Reasonable (6 points): Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request and is the budget request reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represent a good return on investment? Is the proposed budget suitable to the cost of material and services in the targeted geographic area?

>Direct Programming (5 points): Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students, teachers, and/or participants in contact with the environment? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the project? Does the applicant budget for a Great Lakes BWET conference?

>Partner and Participant Compensation (4 points): Are partners adequately compensated for their expertise and contribution to the project? Does the project describe adequate incentives that support teachers' abilities to attend professional development activities?

##### Priority 3:

>Reasonable (6 points): Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request? Is there sufficient detail to verify that the budget request is reasonable for the work proposed?

>Direct Programming (5 points): Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to addressing the stated project objectives? Does the budget adequately detail the amount of

time each individual will spend on the project and is this a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project? Are the requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in the implementation of the proposed project? Does the applicant budget for a Great Lakes B-WET conference?

>Partner and Participant Compensation (4 points): Are partners adequately compensated for their expertise and contribution to the project? Does the project describe adequate incentives that support teachers' abilities to attend professional development activities?

#### 5. Outreach and education (5 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Outreach and education will be scored using the following measures:

##### Priority 1 and 2:

>Outreach (4 points): Does the application describe opportunities for outreach and education around the value of MWEs and environmental education at events that engage school boards, public officials, parents, community organizations, other schools, or the media? Does the project have plans for supporting target audiences in sharing their conclusions and watershed protection knowledge with a school board audience? Is a commitment made to acknowledge NOAA B-WET as the funder in these outreach products?

>Data Management (1 point): Did the applicant include a plan for collecting and managing data. Did the applicant discuss how data gathered from the project (environmental data, science knowledge gain, attitudinal change, etc.) will be shared?

##### Priority 3:

>Outreach (4 points): Does the application describe an outreach strategy that will effectively communicate the program models to other partners in the Great Lakes states? Will this outreach strategy help to broaden and deepen the understanding of the lessons learned from this project?

>Data Management and Sharing (1 point): Does the applicant discuss the data management plan and the relevance of data sharing to their project?

#### B. Review and Selection Process

If an application is received sufficiently in advance of the deadline, NOAA in its sole discretion may be able to inform an applicant of any missing documentation, if time and resources permit. This review is allowed but not assured, given limited resources.

After the application period has closed, received applications will be screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see IV.D. Submission Dates and Times); were submitted by an eligible applicant (see III.A. Eligibility Information); include SF 424 authenticated by an authorized representative; address one of the B-WET priority areas (see I.B.b.); and include required content (see IV.B. Content and Form of Application). If the application does not conform to the requirements and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be rejected without further consideration. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applicants with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

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

a. Technical Review:

The purpose of the technical review is to evaluate each proposal's technical merit via individual evaluations of the proposals. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. Reviewers provide comments (which may be shared with applicants after the competition has concluded) and assign scores to the applications based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of this federal funding opportunity. If one or more non-Federal reviewers are used, no consensus advice will be given.

The Program Officer will average these scores to create a preliminary ranked list of proposals. This preliminary rank order will be used in the subsequent panel meeting where final funding recommendations are made.

b. Panel Review:

A virtual review panel will convene to evaluate the ranking and comments from the Technical Review and discuss the proposals as a group. Discussions are based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. During the panel meeting, reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Reviewers must individually submit a final ranking to the B-WET Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. If one or more non-Federal reviewers are used, no consensus advice will be given by the review panel members. The reviewers' final

rankings will be averaged for each application to produce a final rank order of the proposals. This establishes a final recommendation of rank order for funding.

In the event that there are two or more projects tied in the final rank order that are competing for the final available funds, the technical review scores will determine the rank order. If a tie persists beyond this, all tied projects will be given equal consideration by the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official will resolve any ties by selecting projects based on the selection factors listed in Section V.C. of this federal funding opportunity.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, and the project duration will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities.

Applicants may submit comments to SAM.gov about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.208. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

### C. Selection Factors

The Great Lakes B-WET panel ratings will be provided in rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order

based on the following factors:

- a. Availability of funding;
- b. Balance/distribution of funds;
  - 1. geographically
  - 2. by type of institutions
  - 3. by type of partners
  - 4. by research areas
  - 5. by project types
- c. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
- d. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in sections I.A., I.B., and I.C.;
- e. Applicant's prior award performance;
- f. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups;
- g. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendation for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for awards to NOAA's Grants Management Division who is authorized to obligate funds.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, successful applications are usually recommended within 240 days from the date of publication of this notice. The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2024.

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

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been approved for funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division with the issuance of an award signed by

a NOAA Grants Officer. This is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, which the NOAA Grants Officer will typically issue electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the authorized representative identified by the applicant on the SF-424, typically via an email from the electronic grants management system, and the principal investigator may receive a copy.

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

#### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

THE 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.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

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

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

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

available funds.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: [www.nepa.noaa.gov](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov), including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500\\_1508.pdf](http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA). In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the

words “Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use”; at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

**NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY APPLICABLE TO FINANCIAL AWARDS.** If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at: [www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities\\_assault\\_policy.html](http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities_assault_policy.html).

**REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.** If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States—this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral

part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project. **WAIVERS.** When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOC may grant, a waiver from these requirements. DOC will notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. 1) When DOC has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which DOC determines that: a. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; b. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or c. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. DOC will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at <https://whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america>. **DEFINITIONS.** “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives—that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinyl chloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference” means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. “Project” means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. -- 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIA, § 70917(c)(1).

### C. Reporting

a. **Financial Reports:** All financial reports shall be submitted through the NOAA electronic grants management system.

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

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

## VII. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding Great Lakes B-WET program or the application process, you may contact: Sarah Waters, Great Lakes B-WET Program Coordinator, [sarah.a.waters@noaa.gov](mailto:sarah.a.waters@noaa.gov), (989) 312-3520, or <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bwet/greatlakes/>.

## VIII. Other Information

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any proposal preparation costs. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

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

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

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

#### References:

Fourth National Climate Assessment. Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States. (2018) U.S. Global Change Research Program. Washington, DC.  
<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

Kwauk, C. and R. Winthrop. (2021) “Unleashing the creativity of teachers and students to combat climate change: An opportunity for global leadership.” The Brookings Institution,

Washington, D.C. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/unleashing-the-creativity-ofteachers-and-students-to-combat-climate-change-an-opportunity-for-global-leadership/>

K12 Climate Action Commission. (2021). K12 Climate Action Plan 2021. The Aspen Institute: Washington, DC. <https://www.k12climateaction.org/blog/climate-action-plan-2021>

NAAEE's Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence, NAAEE 2017, <https://naaee.org/eeopro/publication/community-engagement-guidelines>