

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Table of Contents

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY	1
Executive Summary.....	1
Full Text of Announcement.....	2
I. Funding Opportunity Description	2
II. Award Information	3
III. Eligibility Information	4
IV. Application and Submission Information.....	5
V. Application Review Information.....	12
VI. Award Administration Information	15
VII. Agency Contacts.....	19
VIII. Other Information	19

Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

Fisheries Pacific Islands Region Program Office (PIRO)

Funding Opportunity Title

2025 Pacific Islands Marine Education and Training Mini Grant

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-PIR-2025-29397

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.452

Dates

Proposals must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov>, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on February 28, 2025. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 7 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov).

Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on registration requirements. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

Funding Opportunity Description

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is soliciting competitive applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Pacific Islands Region Marine Education and Training (MET) Mini-Grant Program. Projects are being solicited to improve communication, education, and training on marine resource issues throughout the region and increase scientific education for marine-related professions among coastal community residents, including indigenous Pacific islanders, Native Hawaiians, and other underserved communities in the region.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA NMFS is soliciting competitive proposals for grants and cooperative agreements that will increase the sustainability, communication, education, and training on fishing and marine resource issues and increase education for marine-related professions in the Pacific Islands Region (PIR). Projects should prepare communities for employment in marine related professions; increase seafood and fishing safety, marketing, or management; or increase the sustainability of fishing practices through technology improvements or data collection. All projects must be developed with and identify beneficial and appropriate partnerships. These partnerships may include various government agencies (at all levels), non-governmental community organizations (NGOs), traditional and local knowledge practitioners, researchers, or industry. All projects must include partnerships that contribute to the success of the project and build on, or expand relationships in the fishing and marine community.

B. Program Priorities

All projects, regardless of priority, must leverage and develop effective partnerships. These partnerships may include: government agencies (island, local, state, or federal), NGOs, local and traditional knowledge practitioners, researchers, academic institutions, and industry. The partnerships should contribute to the success of the project and build on, or expand relationships in the fishing and marine community. Projects are also encouraged to be place-based and community-driven, as appropriate.

Projects must improve communication, education, and training on marine resource issues in the region and increase education for marine-related professions among coastal community residents. Projects must fall into one or more of the following priorities, which are listed in no particular rank order of preference (i.e., no one factor carrying a higher priority than any other). If a project meets more than one of the listed priorities, the applicant should list first the priority that most closely reflects the objectives of the proposed project. Other priorities addressed in proposals should then be listed as applicable.

1. **Marine Science and Technology:** Education and training projects that are focused on preparing community residents for employment in marine related professions, including marine resource conservation and management, marine science, marine technology, and maritime operations.
2. **Fisheries and Seafood-related Training:** Projects addressing fishery observation, seafood safety and seafood marketing, focused on increasing the involvement of coastal community residents in fishing, fishery management, and seafood-related operations.
3. **Outreach:** Projects to educate and inform consumers about the quality and sustainability of wild fish or fish products farmed through responsible aquaculture. Projects that promote community education and outreach related to safe fishing and boating practices.
4. **Technology:** Projects that, with the fishing industry, not only identify methods and technologies that will improve the data collection, quality and reporting, but also increase the sustainability of fishing practices, and ultimately transfer such methods and technologies among fisheries sectors and to other nations in the Western, Northern and Central Pacific.
5. **Local and Traditional Knowledge:** Projects that enhance science-based management of fishery resources of the region through local and traditional knowledge including Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian knowledge.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to integrate Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) principles into their project proposals by demonstrating an adaptive, holistic approach to marine resource management and ecosystem resilience. NMFS has adopted an EBFM policy, where fisheries should be managed in an ecosystem context to ensure that interacting effects among fisheries, ecosystems, and human activities are accounted for. Proposals should consider ecosystem-level interactions, cumulative impacts, and larger ecosystem processes and vulnerabilities to align with NOAA Fisheries' commitment to maintaining healthy, productive, and resilient marine ecosystems. Further information regarding NMFS EBFM efforts can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/ecosystems/ecosystem-based-fisheries-management>.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. 1855(j)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total funding available under this notice is anticipated to be approximately \$150,000.

Approximately 10 to 15 awards are anticipated to be granted for FY 2025 under this competition. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon FY 2025 Federal appropriations. Proposals not funded in the current fiscal period may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

Proposals in excess of \$15,000 or below \$10,000 are unlikely to be funded. Award amounts will be determined by the proposals and available funds. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant, however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects. If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA NMFS has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

B. Project/Award Period

The project period is recommended to be 12 months in duration. October 1, 2025 is the earliest recommended start date to be used on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

NOAA NMFS will fund the projects under this competition as grants and/or cooperative agreements. The government will be substantially involved in the management and/or operation of the program if a project is funded through a cooperative agreement. This substantial involvement may include but is not limited to partnering in collaborative efforts and/or alignment of activities to meet program priorities. Substantial involvement may also include assisting in the development of educational materials.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies and their employees, as well as Federal instrumentalities (including employees and members) are not eligible to apply.

Projects must be conducted within Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), or American Samoa.

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov).

Registration Requirements: Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on required registrations. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

None.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package consisting of the standard forms (i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511) is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. If an applicant has problems accessing or downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

If you do not have internet access, an application package may be received by contacting: Hideyo Hattori, hideyo.hattori@noaa.gov, NOAA Federal Program Officer, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818, Phone: (808) 725-5057.

B. Content and Form of Application

Application Format:

All application materials should be submitted in PDF (recommended) or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be double-spaced, at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Consideration will only be given to material that is physically included in an application. Information provided via a hyperlink will not be considered, nor will it influence the application evaluation. Failure to follow these requirements will result in the rejection of the application.

A complete standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applications that are not complete on the closing date of this announcement will not be reviewed. Your application must contain all required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management: For maximum effectiveness across its diverse programs, NMFS has adopted an Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) policy, where fisheries should be managed in an ecosystem context to ensure that interacting effects among fisheries, ecosystems, and human activities are accounted for. While EBFM is directed toward fisheries management, we have adopted a similar approach - accounting for ecosystem interactions and considerations - for the protected and other marine species that we are mandated to manage. Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to design and implement their project in a larger ecosystem context by including elements which consider impacts beyond a single species and in a changing environment and climate. Further information regarding NMFS EBFM efforts can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/ecosystems/ecosystem-based-fisheries-management>.

Each application must include:

Federal application forms:

- SF-424
- SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-construction Programs must be completed, and also include all matching funds.
- SF-424B, Assurances, Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non-construction application.
- CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

Application materials:

- Title Page (described below, limit 1 page)
- Project Summary (described below, limit 1 page)
- Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 10 pages)
- Budget Justification (described below, limit 2 pages). Provide justifications (in narrative format for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification should be broken out and detailed using the same budget categories as noted on the SF-424A budget form.
- NEPA Questionnaire. The NOAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire must be completed for each application. Applicants should carefully review the questionnaire and focus their responses on the questions that are relevant to their proposed project. For more information on this requirement, see section "B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements" and <https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf>. This questionnaire does not count towards any page limits.
- Data Sharing or Management Plan (up to 2 pages, if the project collects environmental data). Note that due to the nature of programmatic priorities for MET, we do not anticipate applications that will be collecting environmental data.
- Attachments (limit 15 pages). Other supporting documentation and relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project (combined into one PDF document). All combined attachments must be no longer than 15 pages. Attachment information can include: charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations; abbreviated CVs or resumes of key personnel; letters of collaboration; an indirect cost rate agreement; permit information; or any other supporting information.

Content Requirements:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet, limit 1 page)
 - (a) Project title
 - (b) Principal Investigator (or Project Manager) and Financial Representative with complete contact information (address, fax, email, and phone number)
 - (c) Any co-investigators (or Co-managers) with contact information
 - (d) Start and end dates of proposed project
 - (e) Identification of programmatic priority applicable to the project (Priority 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5)
 - (f) Funding type request (grant or cooperative agreement)
 - (g) Total cost of the project, including federal and non-federal funding requested

2. Project Summary (limit 1 page).

This one page project summary should be a high level description of the project written for the general public audience. The summary may be posted on our website if the project is funded. The summary should tell the story of what the proposed project will do (project goals and objectives); how the project will be conducted (project activities and timelines, project geographic area, number of participants, etc); and expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed project.

3. Project Narrative (limit 10 pages).

This section will be a detailed description of the project goals, objectives, and activities; performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected results or outcomes; information that demonstrates the need for the project; descriptions of methodologies and time-lines for all phases of work; and, if applicable, the relationship to other ongoing work, or work planned, anticipated, or underway through Federal Assistance or other means. The project description should be a clear statement of all work to be undertaken and must include the information listed below.

(a) Project goals and objectives: This section should very briefly state the project goal, and how this goal will address the problem or opportunity the project intends to address. The project objectives should directly support the larger program goals. The objectives should be simple, understandable, and as specific and quantitative as possible. Objects should also be attainable within the time, money and human resources available.

(b) Project activities and plans: This section is the technical or scientific plan of activities that are to be accomplished during the project. The project activities should directly support the already identified objectives. This description should include detailed descriptions of the specific plan and/or methods that will be employed. Each discrete action or component activity of the project should be described in detail. If any activities occur in the marine environment, (e.g., not in a classroom), indicate if any permits are required, and if they have been obtained. Any activities in the marine environment should also include best management practices to prevent or minimize negative impacts to the environment.

(c) Milestone Schedule. This section should display timelines for each of the major tasks, activities, or objectives. It should include target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.

(d) Benefits or results expected: This section should describe how the project will increase the sustainability, viability, and visibility of fishing and marine resource issues and communities in the Pacific Islands Region (PIR). Clearly identify the outcomes, results, and benefits of the project. Describe how these expected outcomes, results, or products will be applied and/or made available to any appropriate user groups. This section should also include information on how you will measure the success of the project.

(e) Need for Government financial assistance: This section should demonstrate the need for government financial assistance. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.

(f) Federal, State and local government activities: List any plans or activities (Federal, State, or local government activities) this project would affect and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans or activities.

(g) Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed and who will be responsible for carrying out project activities. The lead organization/ individual and person listed as the technical contact should be identified as the Project Manager (PM) or Principal Investigator (PI). Use of subcontractors or volunteer staff time to complete project activities and oversight of those individuals should be discussed. The PM/PI is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan as delineated in the proposal. Project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-investigators or Co-Managers. Organizations or individuals that support the project, for example, researchers contributing data or materials, should be referred to as Cooperators. Copies of the PM's or PI's and all Co- investigator's/Co-Manager's current resumes or curricula vitae must be included within the appendices. Resumes or curricula vitae for Cooperators are also encouraged.

4. Budget Justification (not to exceed 2 pages in length).

Each application must include clear and concise budget information covering total project costs, both on the required Federal forms and in a detailed budget narrative. It is vital that all of the budget information include both the non-federal (matching funds) and the federal funds requested.

(a) Applications must include OMB standard form 424A "Budget information - Non Construction Programs." All instructions should be read before completing the form, and the amounts per category and total amounts indicated on the form should correspond with amounts indicated in the budget narrative and justification. This form should include both the federal and non-federal (matching funds) in separate lines/columns. In "SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES" the amount requested from the federal government should be on column (1); the non-federal portion (matching funds) should be in column (2).

(b) The budget narrative/justification should include a sheet/table of costs as well as a written justification that supports the table. We strongly recommend using the NOAA Grant Management Budget Narrative guidance that can be found on their website: https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2019/Jun/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf. The budget narrative should be a maximum of 2-pages. The table should be a detailed list of costs per category. The justification should describe and justify the listed costs. The costs should be broken out in both the corresponding Federal and non-Federal share (direct and indirect cost). If in-kind contributions are included, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of these contributions.

(c) If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 15% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). If the de minimis rate is used, this should be stated within the budget narrative and justification. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer NOAA Grants Management Division 1325 East West Highway 9th Floor Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 lamar.revis@noaa.gov

5. Data Management Plan.

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

6. Appendices (maximum 15 pages).

Abbreviated curricula vitae or resumes of the PM and any Co-Managers should be included with the application. Additional material that is necessary or useful to the description of the project may also be provided (e.g., letters of collaboration, tables or visual materials). Letters of collaboration which document partners or community involvement are strongly recommended.

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

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (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 (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov>, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on February 28, 2025. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 7 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted. See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on required registrations.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

NOAA will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching contribution.

G. Other Submission Requirements

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registration as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov). See below for more detailed information on each required registration process.

1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

SAM.gov registration is required to do business with the U.S. government. After registering with SAM.gov, you will receive a 12-character Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) that you will use throughout the application process.

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for initial SAM.gov registrations and at least two weeks for SAM.gov registration renewals. Additional information on SAM.gov registration is available here: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

You must update your SAM.gov registration any time your entity's information changes. You must also renew and revalidate your entity's SAM.gov registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration. The renewal process may take up to two weeks. Your SAM.gov account's primary point of contact will receive an email message alerting them to the renewal requirement at 60 days, 30 days, and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration by the deadline, it will expire.

2. eRA Commons

After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must register with eRA Commons and create several required user accounts. NOAA uses eRA Commons to process grant applications and manage grant awards.

NOTE: eRA Commons requires applicants to create one ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE and two USER ACCOUNTS before submitting an application. These requirements are described in detail below.

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for eRA Commons registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your Grants.gov registration. Additional information on the eRA Commons registration process is available here: <https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>

After creating an overall account for your "institution", which may be for your organization or yourself as an individual, eRA Commons requires you to set up at least two user accounts: one Signing Official (SO) account and one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account.

The Signing Official (SO) user account must be assigned to an individual with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. The SO will receive 4-5 emails throughout the registration process.

The Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account must be assigned to an individual with primary responsibility for the project(s) described in the grant application. The eRA Commons User ID (Username) for the PD/PI must also be listed on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).

Your SO and PD/PI user accounts must be active before you submit an application. Both accounts can be assigned to the same individual if appropriate.

3. Grants.Gov

After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must complete a one-time registration process with Grants.gov. Grants.gov is a government-wide portal used to solicit and accept grant applications.

We recommend allowing at least two weeks for Grants.gov registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your eRA Commons registration. Additional information on the Grants.gov registration process is available here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

Submission Validation: The Grants.gov and eRA Commons validation processes for a submitted application can take up to two business days after submission. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline. Grants.gov and eRA Commons will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Submissions may also be rejected if:

- The Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI)'s account username within eRA Commons is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).

- The Universal Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 8.c (UEI).

- The Congressional District is not entered in the correct format on the SF-424 form for item 16 (Congressional Districts). The correct format is: [State Abbreviation]-[three digit district number]. For example, Virginia's 1st Congressional District would be listed as VA-001.

- PDF files are not flattened. To flatten a fillable PDF, you can use the "Print to PDF" function from any web browser or PDF reader application.

- File sizes exceed 100 MB.

- Page sizes are greater than 8.5x11.

- File names exceed 50 characters (including spaces).

- File names include special characters.

After you submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by FOUR automated responses (1-Grants.gov Submission Receipt; 2-Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application; 3-Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application; 4-Grants.gov Agency Tracking Number Assignment for Application).

In addition to the Grants.gov automated notification messages, you may receive automated email notifications of any errors or warnings identified by eRA Commons. You must resolve all eRA Commons errors prior to the application due date in order for the application to be processed.

Once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an additional automated notification that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned.

You should save and print the proof of submission messages from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons. If you do not receive an acceptance message from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons, you should follow up with the agency contact listed in VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

If you do not have internet access, an application package may be submitted to Hideyo Hattori, Federal Programs Officer, NOAA/NMFS/PIRO; 1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96818. Paper applications must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on February 28, 2025. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 7 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 25
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal adequately describe its relevance to a MET Program Priority in section B? • Will the project improve communication, education, and training on marine resource issues throughout the region? • Will the project increase scientific education for marine-related professions among coastal community residents? • Does the project include or showcase valuable and appropriate partnerships? • Does the project increase the sustainability, viability, and visibility of marine resource issues in the Pacific Islands Region (PIR)? 	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 20
<p>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. Proposals should provide a clear definition of the project design, strengths and/or weaknesses and the means that are to be employed for securing productive results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? • Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused, realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? • Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider ways to resolve the issues or implement alternative tactics? • Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies? • Is sufficient detail provided in the proposal about the methods proposed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, and are they appropriate? 	
3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 15
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant have the capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners that show adequate administrative capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? • Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project? • Does the proposal include resumes of the Principal Investigator(s)? • In cases where subcontracts are proposed for carrying out specific tasks, are the quality/appropriateness of the personnel, facilities and procedures (laboratory methods, work plan and or quality oversight procedures) adequate? 	
4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 15

<p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This includes reviewing the reasonableness of the costs associated with the required tasks to be performed, and the overall relationship with the cost effectiveness for successfully completing the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposed budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall project budget already secured from other sources? • Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class? 	
5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 25
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal identify anticipated benefits, potential users, indicators of success, and methods of disseminating results? • Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results? Are the various target audiences, such as the fishing community or the general public identified? • Will the outreach methods acknowledge NOAA Fisheries support of the project? 	

Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications.

Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening; panel review; and final selection by the Selecting Official (the NOAA NMFS Regional Administrator).

1. Initial Screening

An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review. When applications are received, they will be screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. D. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and that the application includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be rejected without further consideration.

2. Panel Review

After the initial screening, each application will be reviewed by three or more appropriate federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise. The reviewers will meet and evaluate each proposal individually based on its own merit against the evaluation criteria described in Section V. Evaluation Criteria. All applications, regardless of priority, will be reviewed in this manner. Prior to the meeting or webinar, each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score prior to the panel meeting or webinar. During the panel meeting or webinar, reviewers may revise their scores and comments. Reviewers will submit their final proposal scores to the competition manager by the end of the panel meeting or webinar. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order is developed based on the average score from the reviewer scores. No consensus advice will be developed at the meeting, nor given to NOAA. These reviewers will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect the identity of each reviewer to the maximum extent permitted by law.

3. Selection

After applications have undergone the panel review, the Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based upon the numerical rankings and evaluations of the applications.

Selection Factors

The NOAA PIRO Regional Administrator, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the reviewers to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend proposals to the Grants Officer for funding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors listed in no order of significance:

1. Availability of funds;
2. Balance/distribution of funds;
 - a. By research area;
 - b. By project type;
 - c. By type of Applicant;
 - d. By type of partners;
 - e. Geographic distribution;
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
4. Program priorities as noted in Section I A. and B;
5. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality;
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by July 2025. The earliest start date for projects will be October 1, 2025, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and it is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of eRA or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications). Unsuccessful paper applications will not be returned to the applicant.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

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

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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>.

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

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC) TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in eRA at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

BUREAU TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept an award under this solicitation will be bound by bureau-specific standard terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. For NOAA awards only, the Administrative Standard Award Conditions for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Financial Assistance Awards U.S. Department of Commerce are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance>

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. 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.

NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY. NOAA requires organizations receiving federal assistance to report findings of sexual harassment, or any other kind of harassment, regarding a Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, or any other key personnel in the award.

NOAA expects all financial assistance recipients to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment free workplaces wherever NOAA grant or cooperative agreement work is conducted, including notification pathways for all personnel, including students, on the awards. This expectation includes activities at all on- and offsite facilities and during conferences and workshops. All such settings should have accessible and evident means for reporting violations and recipients should exercise due diligence with timely investigations of allegations and corrective actions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>.

SCIENCE INTEGRITY. 1. Maintaining Integrity. The non-Federal entity shall maintain the scientific integrity of research performed pursuant to this grant or financial assistance award including the prevention, detection, and remediation of any allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, and the conduct of inquiries, investigations, and adjudications of allegations of violations of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. All the requirements of this provision flow down to subrecipients. 2. Peer Review. The peer review of the results of scientific activities under a NOAA grant, financial assistance award or cooperative agreement shall be accomplished to ensure consistency with NOAA standards on quality, relevance, scientific integrity, reproducibility, transparency, and performance. NOAA will ensure that peer review of "influential scientific information" or "highly influential scientific assessments" is conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review and NOAA policies on peer review, such as the Information Quality Guidelines. 3. In performing or presenting the results of scientific activities under the NOAA grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement and in responding to allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, the non-Federal entity and all subrecipients shall comply with the provisions herein and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 202-735D, Scientific Integrity, and its Procedural Handbook, including any amendments thereto. That Order can be found at <http://nrc.noaa.gov/ScientificIntegrityCommons.aspx>. 4. Primary Responsibility. The non-Federal entity shall have the primary responsibility to prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. Unless otherwise instructed by the grants officer, the non-Federal entity shall promptly conduct an initial inquiry into any allegation of such misconduct and may rely on its internal policies and procedures, as appropriate, to do so. 5. By executing this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement the non-Federal entity provides its assurance that it has established an administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigating, and reporting allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct; and that it will comply with its own administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigation, and reporting of such misconduct. 6. The non-Federal entity shall insert this provision in all subawards at all tiers under this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement.

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 about any information concerning organizational performance listed in the Responsibility/Qualification section of SAM.gov for consideration by the awarding agency.

REVIEWS AND EVALUATION. 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 §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.

INDIRECT COST RATE. If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 15% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov.

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted semi-annually. Reports are submitted electronically through eRA.

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 FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Performance Progress Reports: Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. Pertinent, captioned photographs of project activities are requested, and may be included within the progress report document submitted via eRA. Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks accomplished within the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period, using the evaluation criteria (metrics) for each objective as outlined in your Project Narrative (see section IV.B.3.). The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work.

- (a) Report title, reporting period, organization, project manager/investigator, grant number, date.
- (b) Executive Summary: A brief and succinct summary of the project.
- (c) Purpose:
 - Detailed description of the problem that was addressed by the project.
 - Objectives of the project.
- (d) Approach: Detailed description of the work that was performed.
- (e) Project Management: List individuals and/or organizations actually performing the work and how it was done.
- (f) Findings/Results:
 - Actual accomplishments and findings.

- If significant problems developed which resulted in less than satisfactory or negative results, these should be discussed.

- Description of need for additional work, if any.

- Collected data during the course of the performance period should be included in tabular format (e.g., spreadsheet). Final reports must include a complete dataset of data collected during the performance period.

(g) Evaluation:

- Describe the extent to which the project goals and objectives were attained. This description should address the following: Were the goals and objectives attained? How? If not, why? Were modifications made to the goals and objectives? If so, explain.

(h) Dissemination of project results:

- Explain, in detail, how the project's results have been and will be disseminated.

Publications, Videos, and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship: Publication of the results or findings of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of recording and reporting scientific information. These are also constructive means to expand access to federally funded research. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency, and when releasing information related to a funded project, include a statement that the project or effort undertaken was or is sponsored by NOAA Fisheries Service. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgement and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA Fisheries PIRO. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA Fisheries." The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries website. All publications, videos, social media posts, outreach materials, etc., that describe or depict activities conducted under a NMFS permit must be submitted to NMFS for review and approval prior to public distribution. Project managers are strongly encouraged to provide NMFS an opportunity to review public outreach materials that describe or depict federal laws, policies, or guidelines prior to public distribution.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this proposal solicitation, please contact Mr. Hideyo Hattori, NOAA Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818; Phone: (808) 725-5057; Email: hideyo.hattori@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

USE OF APPLICANT INFORMATION AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)

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 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 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.