

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Funding Opportunity Title

2026 Atlantic Sea Scallop Research Set Aside Program

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-GARFO-2026-31286

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.454

Dates

Correction notice: THIS OPPORTUNITY IS NOT ACCEPTING NEW APPLICATIONS. This notice of funding opportunity was published to correct errors in the 2026 Scallop Research Set-Aside Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (NOAA-NMFS-GARFO-2026-31286), which published January 23, 2026, and closed March 23, 2026. Section V, "Application Review Information," contained incorrect information; the description for importance/relevance was duplicated under technical/scientific merit, qualifications, and project costs. The evaluation criteria and associated scores were otherwise correct. Applicants that successfully submitted an application may amend the application in consideration of this correction. This opportunity will not accept new applications.

Complete proposals/applications must be received on or before 5 p.m. EDT on DATE 7 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION. Proposals received after the established deadline will be rejected and returned to the sender without consideration. For proposals submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will be the basis of determining timeliness. The proposal must be validated by Grants.gov in order to be considered timely. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

For those without access to the Internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be postmarked or received by the established due date for the program at the following address: Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, ATTN: 2026 Atlantic Sea Scallop (Scallop) Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m. on the closing date for applications will be accepted for review if the applicant can document that the proposal was provided to the guaranteed delivery service by the specified closing date and time and if the proposal is received by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) no later than 5 p.m., two business days following the closing date. No facsimile or electronic mail proposals will be accepted. July 1, 2026, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

Submission Validation

When you submit an application to this competition you will receive notification of submission validation from Grants.gov and eRA Commons. 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.

In addition to the Grants.gov automated notification messages, once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an automated notification from eRA Commons that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned. If there are errors in the application, eRA Commons will send an automated email notification(s) 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.

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 eRA Helpdesk at 1-866-504-9552 and the agency contact listed in Section VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission. See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on submission validation requirements.

Registration Requirements

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

Funding Opportunity Description: NMFS, in coordination with the New England Fishery Management Council (Council), is soliciting proposals under the Scallop RSA Program. Projects funded under the Scallop RSA Program must enhance the knowledge of the scallop fishery resource or contribute to the body of information on which scallop management decisions are made. Priority will be given to proposals that investigate research priorities developed by the Council, which are detailed under the Program Priorities section of this announcement

Successful applicants will be awarded scallop RSA quota. No federal funds are provided for research under this notification. Rather, proceeds generated from the sale of RSA quota will be used to fund approved activities and compensate scallop vessel owners.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Scallop RSA Program was established through the Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to address scallop research priorities developed by the Council.

B. Program Priorities

Projects funded under the Scallop RSA Program must enhance the understanding of the scallop resource or contribute to scallop fishery management decisions. Priority is given to proposals addressing scallop research priorities as set forth below.

Applicants are encouraged to consider previously funded scallop research projects when developing proposals. Applicants responding to scallop survey priorities are encouraged to review and consider the findings of the Scallop Survey Methodologies Peer Review, which was convened by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in March 2015, and recommendations from the Council's Scallop Survey Working Group, which were adopted by the Council in September 2022. Reports and additional information can be obtained from the Program Officer upon request.

2026 Scallop RSA Research Priorities

SURVEYS (High Priority)

1. **SCALLOP RESOURCE SURVEYS:** Industry-based scallop surveys using dredge and/or optical tools conducted at varying sampling intensities (e.g., intensive and regional), and analysis of collected survey data needed to support annual Atlantic Sea Scallop fishery management and scallop science needs. This includes industry-based surveys within Georges Bank and/or the Mid-Atlantic, and the Gulf of Maine, including the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area. Surveys may extend sampling efforts beyond the current known extent of the sea scallop resource. Survey results must be available by early August of the year in which the survey is conducted (e.g., survey results that would inform 2026 fishing effort decisions must be available by mid-August 2026). The survey or surveys do not need to be carried out by a single grant recipient. In addition, the data needs of some resource areas benefit from redundant surveys that use different sampling technologies (e.g., optical and dredge). Survey data will be used to develop estimates of total and exploitable biomass. Successful projects may be asked to provide data in a standardized format. The primary objective of these surveys would be to provide length frequencies, abundance, and biomass estimates. Applicants that propose to conduct a regional scallop survey may submit proposals with a project award period of up to 4 years (2026-2029).

Medium Priorities: (Priorities 2-8, Not Listed in Rank Order – Equal Importance)

2. **SCALLOP BIOLOGY:** Research on Atlantic sea scallop biology, including studies aimed at understanding recruitment processes (e.g., reproduction and gonad development, timing of spawning, larval transport, larval and early post-settlement stages, source/sink dynamics, age and growth, and yield), spatial population dynamics of the scallop resource, and examination of environmental stressors (anthropogenic and natural) and climate change on all of these processes. This priority also includes research on natural mortality processes, such as scallop predation (e.g., starfish, crab, snails), discard mortality, juvenile mortality events, and disease and parasites. The results of biology research should be informative to scallop stock assessments and projection models (current and future) and to support decision-making by fishery managers.

3. **TURTLES:** Research to support the investigation of sea turtle behavior in the Mid- Atlantic and Georges Bank (via satellite tagging or other means). This could include, but is not limited to, research to understand their seasonal movements, vertical habitat utilization, and the status and range of the population in response to climate change. This could also include research on gear design to reduce incidental takes of ESA-listed species. This research could assist in the collection of data that may be required by current or future biological opinions, to address reasonable and prudent measures of the biological opinion and could be used to evaluate current turtle regulations (e.g., timing and spatial extent of gear modifications). Oceanographic data collected during turtle research should be analyzed and products provided to managers to support decision making (e.g., bottom temperature data and maps).

4. **COMMERCIAL FISHING GEAR:** Commercial dredge and gear research to improve scallop catch

efficiency, improve scallop size selectivity, reduce scallop damage (discard and incidental mortality), reduce non-target species bycatch, and to reduce fuel consumption and improve energy efficiency. Research under this priority area could explore fishermen perspectives and decision-making associated with gear modifications.

5. BYCATCH: Identification and evaluation of methods to reduce the impacts of the scallop fishery with respect to bycatch of small scallops and non-target species. This would include projects that characterize spatial and temporal distribution patterns of non-target species, collect and analyze catch and bycatch data on a near-real time basis, as well as the associated discard mortality rates of key bycatch species. Research efforts focusing on non-target bycatch should provide results that would help the scallop industry avoid or respond to the implementation of accountability measures. Projects should consider the enforceability and feasibility of regulations in the commercial fishery.

6. FISHING IN HIGH DENSITY AREAS: Research to examine the impacts of intensive fishing effort in areas of high scallop densities on non-harvest mortality or sublethal effects. This includes impacts of sediment disruption, impact of high volumes of viscera on the benthic environment and water quality, scallop shell damage, repeated harvest/discarding cycles on scallop mortality, and re-examination of nonharvest mortality assumptions. This may include research that occurs concurrently with harvest. This priority includes research (inclusive of tools in social science) into fisherman's behavior and decision making and ways to improve fishing practices to minimize waste and maximize yield.

7. WIND: Research aimed to support scallop management through studies that assess biological and ecological impacts of offshore wind energy development, and scallop production. This priority also includes research that aims to characterize the impacts of offshore wind energy development on scallop surveys through simulation modeling recommended by the Scallop Survey Working Group, and research that assesses the utility and feasibility of alternative sampling tools.

8. SCALLOP RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT: Research focused on the development of Atlantic sea scallop enhancement tools (spat collection, seed rearing in hatcheries, grow out of juvenile scallops, disease resistance, and offshore seeding of hatchery reared spat) to supplement the scallop population and fishery harvest in the federally managed scallop fishery. Research could focus on the development of standards and best practices for using husbandry techniques to enhance the wild capture fishery while mitigating the impact of predators or could evaluate the economic feasibility of enhancement efforts. Research could also focus on projects that aim to develop and(or) refine techniques for growing seed from spat and transplanting those scallops to beds in federal waters. Projects conducted in state waters should describe plans to comply with local and state regulations. Projects are encouraged to share best practices and lessons learned to advance the state of knowledge in this field. Applicants that propose to conduct scallop resource enhancement research may submit proposals with a project award period of up to 3 years (2026-2028).

General Priorities:

9. HABITAT CHARACTERIZATION AND FISHERY IMPACT RESEARCH: Research on fishery impacts includes (but is not limited to): Identification of which species and life history stages depend on particular habitats vulnerable to alteration by the scallop fishery for use as nursery, over-wintering, or spawning areas; evaluation of long-term or chronic effects of scallop fishing on the ecosystem; habitat recovery potential from fine scale fishing effort; before / after gradient designs. Habitat characterization includes (but is not limited to) research aimed at identifying and assessing the waters and substrate necessary to scallops for spawning, breeding, feeding, and growth to maturity. In particular, projects that would evaluate Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) closures and Habitat Management Areas to assess whether these areas are accomplishing their stated purposes and to assist with better definition of the complex ecosystem processes that occur in these areas would be of interest. Finally, investigation of variability in dredge efficiency across habitats, times, areas, and gear designs to allow for more accurate quantitative

estimates of scallop dredge impacts on the seabed and other managed species, and the development of practicable methods to minimize or mitigate those impacts would also qualify under this research priority.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under sections 303(b)(11), 402(e), and 404(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act), 16 U.S.C. 1853(b)(11), 16 U.S.C. 1881a(e), and 16 U.S.C. 1881c(c), respectively. The Scallop RSA Program is established through the Scallop FMP (69 FR 35193, June 23, 2004) and implementing regulations at 50 CFR 648.56.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Successful applicants will be awarded scallop RSA quota. No federal funds are provided for research under this notification. Rather, proceeds generated from the sale of RSA quota will be used to fund approved activities and compensate scallop vessel owners. The Federal Government is not liable for any costs incurred by the researcher or vessel owner should the sale of set-aside quota not fully reimburse the researcher or vessel owner for their expenses. Any additional funds generated through the sale of set aside landings, above the cost of the research activities, shall be retained by the vessel owner as compensation for the use of his/her vessel.

The Scallop RSA sub-Annual Catch Limit (ACL) is 1.275 million pounds per scallop fishing year (April through March), unless otherwise amended. Under the 2025 Scallop RSA Program solicitation, a portion of the 2026, 2027, and 2028 set aside was awarded. Consequently, NMFS anticipates that under this solicitation there will be up to 760,193 pounds, 787,470 pounds, and 899,631 pounds available from the 2026, 2027, and 2028 RSA sub-ACL, respectively. As part of the 1.275 million pound set-aside, up to 25,000 pounds may be harvested from the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area (NGOM). At this time, there are up to 12,500 NGOM pounds available in 2026, and up to 25,000 pounds available in 2027, 2028, and 2029. Multi-year awards may be supported wholly or in part through scallops that have been set aside from the year in which the research expense is incurred.

All scallop RSA awards will be made in pounds of scallops. RSA quota may be harvested from any area that is open to the scallop fishery (i.e., open access areas and open areas), unless otherwise restricted by the Council and NMFS. The set-aside amount is subject to change, and scallop RSA awards are dependent on available set aside quota. In the event that the entire scallop RSA sub-ACL is not fully expended, NMFS may award unused RSA quota to compensate projects due to low scallop prices or to expand a project to improve the ability of the grantee to meet the proposed objectives and program priorities. When awarding additional scallops to expand a project, NMFS will primarily consider the importance/relevance of the additional research, and available set-aside. In the event that there are multiple projects within a topic area that express interest in expanding their project (e.g., regional scallop surveys), NMFS will consider any unique capabilities of the project to meet program priorities, cost and available set aside, and competition rankings.

Applicants must submit a budget that is based on funds necessary to execute the research plan and funds necessary to compensate vessel owners harvesting set-aside quota. Upon project selection, NMFS will negotiate with successful applicants on the specific RSA quota award. NMFS will establish a common scallop price estimate, based on the best and most recent data available at the time of negotiations, to determine the amount of set-aside necessary to cover research and compensation fishing expenses. For reference, \$15/lb was used for projects funded through the 2025 scallop RSA competition. Multi-year project scallop allocations may be adjusted by NMFS if the scallop price estimate is changed. Questions about the funding mechanism and RSA compensation fishing should be directed to the Program Officer.

B. Project/Award Period

Unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer, July 1, 2026, should be used as the project start date.

Applicants that propose to conduct a regional scallop survey may submit proposals with a project award period of up to 4 years (2026-2029). Applicants that propose to conduct regional scallop resource enhancement research may submit proposals with a project award period of up to 3 years (2026-2028). All other applications may have a project award period of up to 2 years (2026-2027).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected proposals will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of collaboration, participation, or involvement by NMFS in the management of the project. Funding for contractual arrangements for services or products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this notice.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, individuals, state, local, and Native American tribal governments. Federal agencies and instrumentalities are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice. Additionally, employees of any Federal agency or Regional Fishery Management (RFM) Council, including Council members, are ineligible to submit an application under this program.

DOC/NOAA encourages applications from members of the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation.

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 required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Proposals for different and distinct projects must be submitted separately in accordance with the format requirements in Section IV.B. Multiple stand-alone projects in the same proposal will not be accepted.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application information is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. Electronic copies of the Standard Forms for submission of research proposals may be found on the Internet in a PDF (Portable Document Format) version at <https://www.grants.gov/forms.html>. Delays may be experienced when registering with grants.gov near the end of a solicitation period. Therefore, NOAA strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through grants.gov.

Applicants without Internet access may contact Ryan Silva, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, by email ryan.silva@noaa.gov, or phone 978-281-9326. To apply to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, and use the following number: NOAA-NMFS-GARFO-2025-27203.

B. Content and Form of Application

The full application includes required Federal forms, a Project Abstract (one page limit), Project Narrative (15 page limit), Budget Narrative (no page limit), Appendices or Attachments (15 page limit, including a Data Management Plan of up to two pages), and NEPA Questionnaire (no page limit).

Each application must include the following Federal application forms:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.
- SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-construction Programs must be completed. Indicate any matching funds, if applicable.
- 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).

These forms are available at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>. These forms should be submitted through the www.grants.gov website. Applicants submitting hard copy must include one signed original and two signed unbound copies of the application (including supporting information).

The Standard Form SF424 must include the estimated monetary value of the entire project, including costs of compensation fishing and research project costs. This value must be recorded under item 18. Estimated Funding (e) "Other" on the SF424.

The Standard Form SF424A must report the total value under "Non-Federal."

Format requirements:

All application materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages except the one-page summary must be double-spaced, printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins.

Proposal Content Requirements and Guidelines

Project Abstract (1-page limit):

- Organization title;
- Principal Investigator(s) (PI);
- Address, telephone number, and email address of PI(s);
- Area of interest for which you are applying (see section I. B.);
- Project title;
- Project objectives for the project period;
- Summary of work to be performed within the project period; and
- Budget Information - Total funds needed to execute the research plan and compensate fishing industry partners that harvest set-aside quota.

Project Narrative (15 page limit):

Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: Specific objectives and performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the PI's work; and relation to other work planned, anticipated, or underway through Federal assistance.

Each project must be described as follows:

- Identification of problem(s): Describe the specific problem(s) or area(s) of interest to be addressed. Specify the Program Priority(ies) in section I.B. that most closely relates to the proposal.
- Project objectives: Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the "what and when," but should avoid the "how and why" (which is fully addressed in the project description), and; attainable within the time, money and human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measures.
- Project description: The project description is the scientific or technical action plan of activities that are to be accomplished during each budget period of the project. This description must include the specific methodologies, by project job activity, proposed for accomplishing the proposal's objective(s).
- Project impacts: Describe how these products or services will be made available to the fisheries and management communities. Describe how the project results will support the fisheries science and management interests, and/or the fishing community.
- Education and outreach: How will this project provide a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources? This includes the degree to which the potential users of the results, i.e., industry or resource managers, have been involved in the planning of the activity, will be involved in the execution of the activity and/or are providing funds, and whether there is a plan to disseminate the results to user groups (including Regional Fishery Management Councils and the public).
- Permitting: The proposal must describe any Magnuson Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, or other permit requirements related to the proposed research. The proposal also must describe whether the investigators have the necessary permits in hand, or what steps the investigators have taken to obtain the necessary permits. All proposals must respond to this required element whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate "no permits are required."
- Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Include resumes of principal investigators, which may be appendices or attachments. List all persons directly employed by the applicant who will be involved with the project. If a consultant and/or subcontractor is selected prior to application submission, include the name and qualifications of the consultant and/or subcontractor and the process used for selection. Describe who will monitor project performance. Also include participation by persons or groups other than the applicant. Describe how Federal, state, and non-governmental entities, particularly members of fishing communities, will participate in the project, and the nature of their participation.
- RSA compensation fishing and fund generation: The proposal should describe how funds would be derived under an RSA award, and demonstrate an understanding of the concept of RSA compensation fishing and how the RSA funding mechanism works. This includes describing prior RSA experience successfully coordinating with the fishing industry to generate funds.
- Evaluation of project: The applicant is required to provide a description of project accomplishments and progress towards the project objectives and performance measures at the end of each funding period and in the final report. The application must describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to quantify the results of the project.

- Vessel participation: Each proposal must identify the activities for the vessel(s) participating in the project, including research and compensation fishing activities. The applicant should differentiate between fishing industry partners that would participate in the project, if funded, and those where no such agreement exists (e.g., previous partners);
- Need for Government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for assistance. Explain why other funding sources cannot fund all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.
- Federal, state and local government activities: List any programs (Federal, state, or local government or activities, including Sea Grant, state Coastal Zone Management Programs, etc.) this project would affect and describe the relationship between the project and those plans or activities. Describe any coordination with other agency programs or on-going research efforts. Describe any other proposals or outside activities that are closely related to the objectives of this proposal.
- Results from prior NOAA/NMFS support (not included in the 15-page limitation if submitted as an appendix.): If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received support from the NOAA/NMFS in the past 5 years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided and may be placed in the Project Narrative or in an Appendix:
 - The NOAA award number, amount and period of support;
 - The title of the project;
 - Summary of the results of the completed work, including, for a research project, any contribution to the development of human resources in science/biology;
 - Publications resulting from the award (Reprints may be submitted, and are requested, for documentation if applicable);
 - Brief description of available data, samples, physical collections and other related research products not described elsewhere; and
 - If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of how the completed work relates to the proposed work.

Project Costs and Budget Narrative:

Total project costs are the amount of funds required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description and compensate industry partners that harvest set aside quota.

Provide a detailed table with Budget Narrative (as an attachment not included in the page limits for the Project Narrative or Appendices) to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, such as vessel charters, and indirect costs). Supplies (<\$10,000/item) and equipment (>= \$10,000/item) should be broken out in as much detail as possible. The budget table and narrative submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on the SF-424 and SF-424A forms. If indirect costs are proposed, include a copy of the current Federally approved rate, if applicable. Additional cost detail may be required prior to a final analysis of overall cost allowability, allocability, and reasonableness.

The proposal must state how the proceeds from the sale of compensation fishing activities, including those derived from incidental catch, will be divided between the vessel and applicant. Proposals must provide a description of the safeguards that will be used to ensure that the set-aside award will not be exceeded. There should be a description of potential risk factors that could result in a budget shortfall, and what steps the project would take to mitigate such risk.

Please note the following restrictions for salaries and fringe benefits: Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. Hourly rates and projected hours worked on the project and/or percentage of time and yearly salary should be included for all salary requests. Applicants are strongly encouraged to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure the proposal is competitive.

Appendices or Attachments:

Supporting documents, including resumes, letters of intent for vessels to participate in research activities, and any relevant contracts.

Data Sharing Plan:

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.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement.

The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of the proposal review. Complete guidance for the data sharing plan can be found under section IV.B.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan (up to 2 pages). See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional information on what the plan should contain.

As part of this application process, questions from The Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants, OMB Approval Number 0648-0538, must be answered and submitted with the application. This form is located at <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov>. Failure to complete all of the questions with current and relevant information will result in the application being considered incomplete.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan (up to 2 pages). See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional information on what the plan should contain.

NEPA Questionnaire:

As part of this application process, questions from The Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants, OMB Approval Number 0648-0538, must be answered and submitted with the application. This form is located at <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov>. Failure to complete all of the questions with current and relevant information will result in the application being considered incomplete.

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

Complete proposals/applications must be received on or before 5 p.m. EDT on March 23, 2026. Proposals received after the established deadline will be rejected and returned to the sender without consideration. For proposals submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will be the basis of determining timeliness. The proposal must be validated by Grants.gov in order to be considered timely. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

For those without access to the Internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be postmarked or received by the established due date for the program at the following address: Ryan Silva, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Dr., Gloucester, MA, 01930 ATTN: 2026 Scallop RSA Program. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. (Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m. on the closing date for applications will be accepted for review if the applicant can document that the proposal was provided to the guaranteed delivery service by the specified closing date and time and if the proposal is received by NMFS no later than 5 p.m., two business days following the closing date.)

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants will need to determine if their State participates in the intergovernmental review process. Information on Intergovernmental Review (SPOC List) can be found at the following website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/office-federal-financial-management>. This information will assist applicants in providing either a Yes or No response to Item 16 of the Application Form, SF-424, entitled "Application for Federal Assistance."

F. Funding Restrictions

Proposals to fund research started before final approval of the project for set-aside awards are eligible for consideration, but any project expense incurred prior to the final determination is done solely at the researcher's risk.

Set-aside quota may only be harvested from open areas and open access areas, excluding areas identified by the Council and NMFS as closed to RSA compensation fishing.

The Federal Government shall not be liable for any costs incurred by any applicant to this announcement or any proposed or selected application or project. Any additional funds generated through the sale of the fish harvested under the research quota, above the cost of the research activities, shall be retained by the vessel owner as compensation for use of his/her vessel.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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). 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, once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an automated notification from eRA Commons that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned. If there are errors in the application, eRA Commons will send an automated email notification(s) 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.

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 eRA Helpdesk at 1-866-504-9552 and the agency contact listed in Section VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission. See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on submission validation requirements.

Other requirements:

NOAA employees (whether full-time, part-time, or intermittent) are not permitted to assist in the preparation of an application, except that staff may provide information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, NOAA employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application. However, the Council or NMFS contact person may provide assistance to researchers who are seeking vessels to participate in the harvest of set-aside quota or participate in research activities. NMFS, in consultation with the Council, may decide to hold a meeting with the public to discuss general topics concerning past RSA program accomplishments and ways to enhance communications on funding priorities and associated potential study methods. Such meetings will be publicized by NMFS and the Council in accordance with their respective requirements.

Permits and Approvals: If an exemption from Federal regulations is proposed, include a list of the specific regulations, along with a brief justification for each regulation that needs to be waived.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, ATTN: 2026 Atlantic Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside Program.

V. Application Review Information

<p>1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals</p>	<p>Maximum Points: 20</p>
<p><u>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Applicants should provide a clear definition of the problem, need, issue, or hypothesis to be addressed. The proposal should describe its relevance to RSA Program priorities. If not directly related to priorities listed in this solicitation, applicants should provide justification why the proposed project should be considered.</u></p> <p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Applicants should provide a clear definition of the problem, need, issue, or hypothesis to be addressed. The proposal should describe its relevance to RSA Program priorities. If not directly related to priorities listed in this solicitation, applicants should provide justification why the proposed project should be considered.</p>	
<p>2. Technical/scientific merit</p>	<p>Maximum Points: 50</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. Special emphasis will be given to proposals that foster and improve cooperative interactions with the fishing industry and fishing communities, other research organizations conducting scallop research, NMFS, and other stakeholders. A clear description of the project design, including a detailed description of field and laboratory work, and analysis methods, should be provided. The time frame for conducting the proposed research should be clearly specified. Activities that take place over a wider versus narrower geographical range, where appropriate, are preferred.

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3. Overall qualifications of applicants

Maximum Points: 10

This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes demonstration of support, cooperation and/or collaboration with the fishing industry, and qualifications/experience of project participants.

This criterion also assesses the applicant's understanding and experience with how funds are derived under an RSA award and the concept of RSA compensation fishing. This includes prior RSA experience successfully coordinating with the fishing industry to generate funds. If the applicant does not have such experience, does the applicant demonstrate a thorough understanding of this concept and how funds would be generated under an RSA award?

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4. Project costs

Maximum Points: 10

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Cost-effectiveness of the project is considered.

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5. Outreach and Education

Maximum Points: 10

This criterion assesses whether the project involves a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. This includes identification of anticipated benefits, potential users, likelihood of success, a clearly defined data management plan, and methods of disseminating results.

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Evaluation Criteria

NMFS will solicit written technical evaluations from three or more federal and public/private sector experts to determine the technical merit of the proposal and to provide a rank score of the project based on the evaluation criteria.

NMFS may simultaneously convene a technical review panel from the same pool of experts to discuss the technical merit of applications for scallop resource surveys, bycatch research, scallop biology research, or other areas of focus. Following the panel discussion(s), reviewers would submit independent written evaluations and scores in accordance with the technical evaluation criteria listed below.

Review and Selection Process

In addition to the technical evaluation as described above, NMFS, in consultation with the Council, will convene a management review panel, including Council members and scallop fishery experts, to review and individually critique the proposals to enhance NOAA's understanding of the proposals as they relate to the program priorities enumerated in Section I.B. Following this meeting, management panelists will submit comments and recommendations to NOAA to help inform project selections. No consensus recommendations will be made by the management review panel.

NMFS may consult additional subject matter experts to inform final selection recommendations. Applicants may be required, in consultation with NMFS, to further refine/modify the study methodology as a condition of project approval.

Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award 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:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. geographically
 - b. by type of institution
 - c. by type of partners
 - d. by research priority
 - e. by project types

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

Key program policy factors (see 4 above) to be considered by the Selecting Official are: (1) The time of year the research activities are to be conducted; (2) the ability of the proposal to meet the applicable experimental fishing requirements; (3) redundancy of research projects; and (4) logistical concerns. Therefore, the highest scoring projects may not necessarily be selected for an award. All approved research must be conducted in accordance with provisions approved by NOAA. Unsuccessful applications will be returned to the submitter. Successful applications will be incorporated into the award document.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Award announcements are expected 6 months following the deadline for this announcement.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

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.

DATA SHARING PLAN. 1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. 2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. 3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at:

https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information:

<https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information>

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 <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-202-735d-2-scientific-integrity>. 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.

AWARDS DESIGNATED AS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. The Department of Commerce has designated this award as Research and Development (R&D) under 2 CFR § 200.1 for purposes of award administration. The Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions, dated November 12, 2020, are no longer in effect and would not apply to awards made under this announcement. 2 CFR 200.308(h), which would apply to awards made under this announcement, would provide a waiver of prior approval requirements in certain circumstances. In the event the Department of Commerce adopts additional terms specific to R&D awards, awards made under this announcement may be amended by the Grants Officer to incorporate the additional terms.

COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL SAFETY. Pursuant to Title 46 U.S.C. Chapter 45, all commercial fishing vessels chartered for NMFS-sponsored research are subject to inspection in accordance with 46 C.F.R. Parts 24, 25, 26, and 28 (as applicable). NMFS financial assistance recipients are responsible for observing all laws and regulations applicable to their funded projects. Award recipients are encouraged to verify inclusion under valid agreements with the United States Coast Guard and seek any required permits or Letters of Designation to safely conduct research aboard a commercial fishing vessel. Obtaining the proper authorizations may prevent work interruptions resulting from enforcement inquiries. Fieldwork activities proposed in this award may require additional inspections and permitting. No on-water tasks may be performed until appropriate permits are applied for and obtained. Documentation must be filed with NOAA and approved prior to initiating on-water Activities.

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.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 14173. Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity. This award term implements Executive Order 14173, 90 FR 8633 (Jan. 21, 2025), Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity. By accepting this U.S. Department of Commerce financial assistance award, the recipient: (1) agrees that compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of Title 31 United States Code; and (2) certifies to the Department that it does not operate any programs promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws.

RESTORING AMERICAN SEAFOOD COMPETITIVENESS. Pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 14276, Restoring American Seafood, the United States aims to address unfair trade practices, eliminate unsafe imports, level the unfair playing field that has benefited foreign fishing companies, promote ethical sourcing, reduce regulatory burdens, and ensure the integrity of the seafood supply chain. As applicable, the purpose, policies, and requirements of EO 14276 apply to awards made under this notice.

GOLD STANDARD SCIENCE. In performing activities under Federal awards, applicants should commit to complying with administration policies, procedures, and guidance respecting Gold Standard Science. As detailed in Executive Order 14303, Restoring Gold Standard Science (May 23, 2025), Gold Standard Science refers to science conducted in a manner that is:

- Reproducible.
- Transparent.
- Communicative of error and uncertainty.
- Collaborative and interdisciplinary.
- Skeptical of its findings and assumptions.
- Structured for falsifiability of hypotheses.
- Subject to unbiased peer review.

- Accepting of negative results as positive outcomes.
- Without conflicts of interest.

PROHIBITION ON USING FEDERAL AWARDS TO PROMOTE OR SUPPORT THEORIES OF DISPARATE-IMPACT LIABILITY. In accordance with Executive Order 14281, Restoring Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy (April 23, 2025), it is the policy of the Federal Government to eliminate the use of disparate-impact liability in all contexts to the maximum possible and permitted by law.

TERMINATION. In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.340(a), this federal award may be terminated in part or in its entirety as follows:

1. By DOC or the pass-through entity if the recipient or subrecipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of this federal award.
2. By DOC or the pass-through entity with the consent of the recipient or subrecipient, in which case the two parties must agree upon the termination conditions. These conditions include the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.
3. By the recipient or subrecipient upon sending DOC or the pass-through entity a written notification of the reasons for termination, the effective date, and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. If DOC or the pass-through entity determines that the remaining portion of this federal award will not accomplish the purposes for which this federal award was made, DOC or the pass-through entity may terminate this federal award in its entirety.
4. By DOC or the pass-through entity to the extent authorized by law, if the award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

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 Measures: NOAA will evaluate project performance based on alignment with administration priorities, including but not limited to, domestic economic expansion, infrastructure modernization, capacity building, and national food security, alongside adherence to Executive Orders and 'Gold Standard Science.' These overarching criteria are assessed through a framework that measures a project's contribution to fishery economic optimization, domestic seafood utilization, infrastructure capacity, supply chain resilience, and national maritime strategy. To ensure effective implementation, NOAA reserves the right to incorporate specific quantitative and qualitative metrics into the award agreement (i.e. Notice of Award; Specific Award Conditions), These metrics will be focused on the project's objectives and its ability to foster industry growth, technical modernization, and workforce readiness.

Grant Reporting Requirements: In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually for RSA awards, and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted every 6 months. 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.fsr.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Grant Reporting Requirements: DOC implemented a Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) for research awards in accordance with the requirement for non-Federal entity submission of performance reports using OMB approved government-wide standard information collections per §200.328. The recipient must complete the RPPR directly in NOAA's electronic grants management system. The RPPR format and instructions are available at http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/.

Performance or progress reports are required to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer semi-annually. These reports will be due no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of an award. The final report is due no later than 90 days after the award expiration. The progress reports must include:

- A list of entities, firms, or organizations that performed the work, and a description of how the work was accomplished;
- A detailed accounting of all fish caught during research activities (including catch by vessels operating under a Letter of Acknowledgment), including weight by species, and disposition of catch;
- A detailed accounting for compensation fishing activities that occurred during the reporting period should be attached with each progress report and the final report. Compensation fishing reports should be provided in an electronic spreadsheet, and should include the following information: Vessel name, vessel permit number, date landed, RSA scallop pounds landed, scallop RSA value, incidental catch pounds landed by species, incidental catch value, funds provided to grant recipient. In addition, for the final report, the grant recipient must provide a final accounting of all funds derived from compensation fishing, and address the following questions: 1. If more funds were generated than the total amount of funds identified in the proposed budget, provide a detailed description for how those funds were used, or will be used, or 2. If fewer funds were generated than the total amount of funds identified in the proposed budget, describe why the shortfall occurred, and if it affected project proposed goals and objectives. This information should be sent as a separate attachment with each progress report;
- Recipients must submit receipts, or other proof of purchase, for any equipment or supplies costing \$5,000 or more.
- Principal Investigators should, when possible, make any report or publication that details research findings accessible to the general public. Where appropriate, data generated from the research must be formatted in a manner consistent with NMFS and Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) databases. Contact the Program Officer for additional information;
- Principal Investigators should anticipate being requested to provide an oral presentation and a written summary report to the Council's Scallop Committee, Advisory Panel, and(or) Plan Development Team on the results of their research; and

- Data from research projects must be submitted in electronic format with appropriate documentation to NMFS, as requested.

Vessel Reporting Requirements: Vessels operating under an Exempted Fishing Permit or conducting compensation fishing must report each trip to NMFS via the vessel monitoring system in accordance with the instructions provided by NMFS. If the grant recipient or vessel operator does not meet the terms and conditions of these permits, these permits may be revoked by NMFS. Additionally, non-compliance with these reporting requirements could be cause for not awarding future NOAA projects.

Other reporting: 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 sub awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

Ryan Silva, Federal Program Officer, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930 by phone at 978-281-9326, or via e-mail at ryan.silva@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

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's Research Set-Aside Program. 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's Research Set-Aside Program. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA." The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Research Set-Aside Program's website.