2024 Pacific Northwest Bay Watershed Education and Training

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: 2024 Pacific Northwest Bay Watershed Education and Training

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2024-2008257

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates: Electronic applications must be received by 8:59 p.m. Pacific Time /11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, February 1, 2024 to be considered for funding.

Applicants are required to apply online through www.grants.gov. Use of Grants.gov requires an advance registration process that may take a few days or several weeks. In addition, when developing your submission timeline, keep in mind that it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject a submitted application.

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary office) is seeking proposals under the Pacific Northwest B-WET program (https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/learn/bwet.html).

The Pacific Northwest Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program is an environmental education program that supports locally relevant, authentic experiential learning in the K-12 environment. Funded projects provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs; defined below) for students, related professional development for teachers, and help to support regional education and environmental priorities in the Pacific Northwest. The primary delivery is through competitive grants.

Every year, the NOAA B-WET program supports environmental education programs for thousands of students and teachers. These programs engage youth in MWEEs that provide memorable hands-on, experiential learning that are not typically available within traditional classrooms. It also plays a significant role in providing professional development to classroom teachers nationwide that increases their content knowledge, skills, and pedagogical expertise.

The FY24 Pacific Northwest B-WET funding announcement focuses on the following priority areas:

1) Systemic classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that promote climate resilience and include high-quality teacher professional development related to the MWEEs; and

2) Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that appropriately involve Indigenous Knowledge and promote climate resilience.

For Pacific Northwest B-WET, applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state; however, education projects must target teachers and/or students in the Pacific Northwest region. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Pacific Northwest region is defined as Oregon and Washington.

This funding opportunity meets NOAA's Vision of healthy ecosystems (http://www.noaa.gov/our-mission-and-vision), helping to ensure that ocean, estuarine, and related ecosystems and the species that inhabit them are vibrant and sustainable in the face of challenges.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

a. OVERVIEW

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, authentic experiential learning focused on K–12 audiences. The primary delivery of B-WET is through competitive funding that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs; defined in Section I.A.b) for students, related professional development for teachers, and help to support regional education and environmental priorities in the Pacific Northwest.

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

The Pacific Northwest B-WET regional program is managed by NOAA’s Office of Education and NOAA’s Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1994 as the first national marine sanctuary in the Pacific Northwest. It encompasses nearly 3,200 square miles off the Washington coast, extending from Cape Flattery to the mouth of the Copalis River and protects significant natural and cultural resources.

The Pacific Northwest B-WET program supports grantee capacity building and connects grantees to local NOAA assets and relevant STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) expertise, while being responsive to local education and environmental priorities. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Pacific Northwest region is defined as Oregon and Washington.

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic

learning standards, stimulating discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET program, have been shown to increase interest in STEM, thus contributing to NOAA's obligations under the America Competes Act (33 USC 893a(a)).

b. DEFINING THE MEANINGFUL WATERSHED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE (MWEE)

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

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

MWEEs are appropriate for all grade levels with content and practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades — starting with teacher-guided investigations and progressing to student-led inquiry. Using the MWEE framework helps educators create an engaging program to achieve their learning objectives (i.e., the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should be able to exhibit following instruction). Learning objectives should address academic standards, but might also include other objectives, such as teamwork, social-emotional learning, and civic responsibility.

1. MWEE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The MWEE consists of four essential elements that describe “what students do:” Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental

Action Projects. These elements, together with the supporting practices, create a learner-centered framework that emphasizes the role of the student in actively constructing meaning from the learning experiences. The essential elements are not meant to be linear. In fact, some elements, such as Synthesis and Conclusions, occur repeatedly throughout the MWEE.

1.1 Issue Definition

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

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

1.2 Outdoor Field Experiences

Students participate in multiple Outdoor Field Experiences to explore the driving question and strengthen their connection to the natural world. Within appropriate safety guidelines, students are actively involved in planning and conducting the field investigations, including developing supporting questions to explore the driving question in the field. Field experiences allow students to interact with their local environment and contribute to learning in ways that traditional classroom or laboratory settings may not. During field experiences, students can use their senses, scientific equipment, and technology to make observations, collect data or measurements, and conduct experiments necessary to answer their supporting questions and inform environmental action. Students who have opportunities to learn in, thrive in, and appreciate the outdoors can become informed and engaged champions for our natural resources.

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

1.3 Synthesis and Conclusions

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

1.4 Environmental Action Projects

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

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

Environmental Action Projects can take many forms and may fall into the following types:

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

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

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

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

2. MWEE SUPPORTING PRACTICES

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

2.1 Teacher Facilitation

MWEEs require that teachers support student learning for the duration of the MWEE, both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers balance roles of facilitation, direct instruction, and coaching to create a student-centered learning experience where the essential elements

of the MWEE come together to support goals for learning and create opportunities for students to take active roles in the learning process. Teachers provide space for student choice and voice by creating learning experiences that center on what students value. Even when activities or lessons occur at partner sites or are primarily led by partners at the school, teachers should be actively engaged. Teachers should connect these experiences to prior learning, foster critical thinking, and lead reflection after the experience so, regardless of the facilitator, the entire MWEE experience feels cohesive to the students.

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

2.2 Learning Integration

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

2.3 Sustained Experience

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

2.4 Local Context

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

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

3. TEACHER MWEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS
Professional development providers play a crucial role in preparing teachers to implement successful MWEEs with their students. Professional development that includes characteristics such as: relevant content; explicit modeling of educational frameworks; collaboration, feedback and modeling instruction such as student-centered teaching; adequate time for professional development including time for ongoing support; and offering participation incentives that teachers value leads to a variety of positive outcomes. Professional development should empower teachers to confidently and competently use the MWEE framework to support standards-based learning that aligns with local education agency initiatives. Teachers should gain confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will be able to implement MWEEs after the professional development has ended. To set teachers up for success, the following six overarching characteristics, informed by education research and evaluation results, are recommended for inclusion in professional development to support teachers implementing MWEEs.

3.1 Increases teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues

Professional development facilitators should ensure that teachers have an adequate level of content knowledge in science and specific to their grade level and discipline to support their MWEE. The content knowledge should also be connected to the interactions between natural systems and social systems, including human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth systems. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions about the environment, teachers must also experience and build skills that enable them to address these traditionally non-academic factors in their classrooms. When combined, this knowledge and these experiences often result in teachers who are more aware

of, and more prepared for, the complexity of implementing MWEEs.

3.2 Models MWEE framework

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

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

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

3.4 Allows for adequate instructional time and ongoing support

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

3.5 Offers appropriate incentives

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

3.6 Meets jurisdictional guidelines and engages leadership

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

c. RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING MWEEs

B-WET and its partners have developed resources to support implementation of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs).

>MWEE resources (https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-resources)

B. Program Priorities

Proposals MUST address one of the following Program Priorities (described below in detail), as well as all Universal Elements that are described below in Section I.B.b.

1. Systemic classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that promote climate resilience and include high-quality teacher professional development related to the MWEEs;

2. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that appropriately involve Indigenous Knowledge and promote climate resilience.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM PRIORITIES

1. PRIORITY 1: Systemic classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that promote climate resilience and include high-

quality teacher professional development related to the MWEEs.

The NOAA B-WET program seeks applications for projects that support long-term systemic classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that promote climate resilience and include high-quality teacher professional development related to the MWEEs. Although time may be needed to develop capacity for systemic implementation, projects under this priority should have the end goal of ultimately reaching the entire student population in one or more grades within a school or school district with teacher-supported MWEEs. Teacher professional development and supported student activities under this priority area should incorporate science and stewardship activities focused on issues of ocean and climate science as it relates to the local watershed, and address all aspects of the MWEE as defined in Section I.A.b.

Proposals should include a plan of action to show how teacher professional development will ultimately lead to systemic MWEEs where students participate in all MWEE essential elements as defined in Section I.A.b (i.e., Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental Action Projects). Student MWEEs should be organized around a driving question that has students focus on a locally relevant environmental issue or phenomenon affecting the watershed, coastal, and / or ocean ecosystems.

Projects that are systemic encourage ownership from a broad range of constituents and promote long-term sustainability of the MWEE project in a school or school district. These programs require leadership and support from the school or school district, therefore partnerships with school divisions and/or the state department of education (if the applicant is not one of these entities) are highly encouraged and necessary. Additionally, because of the broad reach of systemic projects, partnerships with multiple partners are often required to ensure all students receive all components of a MWEE and meaningful professional development for teachers is provided.

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

Systemic MWEEs should be embedded across an entire grade level or levels in a school, or be part of a broader systemic program in a school or school district to reach every student. For example, projects may reach only half of a grade level’s teachers and students if the

application includes documentation from the school district and other partners that the proposed project is a component of a larger systemic effort that reaches the entire grade level. If this is not feasible, applicants should explain why it is not feasible and how they will build toward systemic implementation over the course of the grant and into the future.

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

Teacher professional development should be offered for all teachers whose students will be engaged in MWEEs so they can support classroom integration. It should deliver training on both content and instruction outdoors, include yearlong support for teachers, and include a plan for how teachers will be involved in implementing watershed education with their students. Professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds as an alternative to offsite field experiences. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources.

Professional development should empower teachers to confidently and competently use the MWEE approach to support standards-based learning that aligns with local education agency initiatives. In order to gain and maintain environmental education competencies, teachers benefit from sustained, high quality professional development that includes ongoing support and feedback. Teachers should gain confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will be able to implement MWEEs after the professional development has ended. Projects submitted under this area should be designed so that teachers not only understand what a MWEE is, but why this type of pedagogy is important. The goal is to ensure that professional development experiences for the teacher ultimately benefit their students.

Based on current education research and B-WET evaluation results, we recommend professional development providers consider the following in the design of professional development to support change in teacher practice and the implementation of impactful MWEEs.

According to evaluation data on teacher professional development, between 24-30% teachers are not participating in environmental action projects, one of the MWEE essential elements, during professional development. Research suggests teachers are more likely to engage their

students in activities they experience themselves during professional development programs. Therefore, MWEE professional development should always include opportunities for teachers to participate in environmental action projects that connect to the watershed issue being studied, as well as the inquiry activities their students will take to plan and implement their own action projects.

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

Professional development, and subsequent implementation with students, may take place on school grounds or at off site locations. Where appropriate, professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their school grounds and/or adequate resources for transportation for teachers to participate in off site professional development.

Since teachers often cite the lack of transportation funding as a barrier to taking students off school grounds for field trips, if you believe your proposed projects would benefit students the most by bringing them to a site that requires transportation to the site, we encourage you to allocate funds in your budget to cover transportation costs.

2. PRIORITY 2: Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that appropriately involve Indigenous Knowledge and promote climate resilience.

The NOAA B-WET program seeks applications for projects that support Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that appropriately involve Indigenous Knowledge and promote climate resilience. Supported student activities under this priority area should involve Indigenous Knowledge and climate resilience activities as it relates to the local watershed and address all aspects of the MWEE as defined in Section I.A.b.

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the White House Council on Environmental Quality issued a memorandum to recognize Indigenous Knowledge as one of the many important bodies of knowledge that contributes to our collective understanding of the environment and to inform evidence-based decision making, along with the scientific, technical, social, and economic advancements of the United States. [Executive Office of the President Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies, Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge (Nov. 2022) (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf)

Although Indigenous Knowledge may have different meanings to different entities and Peoples, for the purpose of this funding opportunity, the following overview may be used: "Indigenous Knowledge is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by Tribes and Indigenous Peoples through interaction and experience with the environment. It is applied to phenomena across biological, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual systems. Indigenous Knowledge can be developed over millennia, continues to develop, and includes understanding based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment and long-term experiences, as well as extensive observations, lessons, and skills passed from generation to generation. Indigenous Knowledge is developed by Indigenous Peoples including, but not limited to, Tribal Nations, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Each Tribe or Indigenous community has its own place-based body of knowledge that may overlap with that of other Tribes.

Indigenous Knowledge is based in ethical foundations often grounded in social, spiritual, cultural, and natural systems that are frequently intertwined and inseparable, offering a holistic perspective. Indigenous Knowledge is inherently heterogeneous due to the cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic differences from which it is derived, and is shaped by the Indigenous Peoples' understanding of their history and the surrounding environment. Indigenous Knowledge is unique to each group of Indigenous Peoples and each may elect to utilize different terminology or express it in different ways. Indigenous Knowledge is deeply connected to the Indigenous Peoples holding that knowledge." [Executive Office of the President Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies, Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge, (Nov 2022) (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf)

Applications under this priority should include a plan of action to show how students will participate in all MWEE essential elements as defined in Section I.A.b (i.e., Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental Action Projects). Student MWEEs should be organized around a driving question that has students focus on a

locally relevant environmental (which may include cultural connections such as language, food security and/or food sovereignty) issue or phenomenon affecting the watershed, coastal, and / or ocean ecosystems. Applications should include a general overview of activities, and applicants should clearly understand and convey the primary learning objectives.

Applications for projects can come from any eligible applicant. However, substantial involvement, coordination and support from an appropriate Indigenous organization or government is required. To document the appropriate level of support and engagement from the Indigenous organization or government, official letters of collaboration from Indigenous entities are required with proposals.

Since teachers often cite the lack of transportation funding as a barrier to taking students off school grounds for field trips, if you believe your proposed projects would benefit students the most by bringing them to a site that requires transportation to the site, we encourage you to allocate funds in your budget to cover transportation costs.

b. UNIVERSAL ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED WITH EACH PROGRAM PRIORITY

All proposals submitted should address the following universal elements:

1. INVOLVE EXTERNAL SHARING AND COMMUNICATION
Projects should promote peer-to-peer sharing and emphasize the need for external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages the students to share their experiences with other students or with the community (e.g., through a mentoring program, newsletters, journals, or community presentations).

NOAA would like to encourage grantees to share educational resources (lesson plans, curricula, videos, worksheets, etc.) created as a part of your grant with other grantees and educators. Please consider discussing what products you plan to create and how you plan to make them available to others. Costs associated with producing and sharing accessible resources may be included in your project budget. You may also submit resources for inclusion in the NOAA Education resource collections (https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections) or Sea to Sky database (https://www.noaa.gov/education/resources). NOAA will provide grantees with additional guidance on how to submit resources.

2. DEMONSTRATE PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships are essential to implementing the Pacific Northwest B-WET program.

Applications should include multiple partners. A partnership is a collaborative working relationship between two or more organizations. In most cases, partnerships with school divisions and/or the state department of education (if the applicant is not one of these entities) are highly encouraged and necessary.

Applicants are encouraged to work with community organizations that lead with equity (if the applicant is not one of these entities). In order to be effective, sustainable, and equitable, environmental education must be integrated within organizations that understand and support the needs of their community. In addition, the impacts of the pandemic will be felt disproportionately by historically marginalized groups, particularly students of color and students from low-income families, who are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts. Therefore, the NOAA B-WET program is interested in projects that partner specifically with organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities. Projects are strongly encouraged to develop meaningful and mutually-beneficial partnerships that honor the strengths of community organizations. In successful partnerships, organizations have shared goals and work together to share resources, communicate effectively, collaborate on decision-making, and competently engage members of diverse cultures and expertise. Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project. Applicants are encouraged to apply NAAEE's Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence (https://eepro.naaee.org/eepro/resources/community-engagement-guidelines-0) in developing their project plans for engagement of target audiences.

Community partnerships may look different across proposals but may include:

> Organizations and institutions that serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities;

> Partnerships that help to address a watershed challenge, problem, or phenomenon by bringing in local expertise on existing environmental issues and creating innovative solutions;

> Partnerships that enhance the local context, cultural relevance, and cultural competence in professional development for all teachers.

All partners should be actively involved in the project, not just supply equipment or curricula. Letters from each partner must be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement.

3. ALIGN TO EDUCATIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS
Projects should be aligned to state and/or local learning standards and support local education agency initiatives, including but not limited to the Next Generation Science Standards (https://www.nextgenscience.org/).

4. ALIGN TO NOAA EDUCATION PLAN AND INCORPORATE NOAA ASSETS
MWEEs should be aligned to the NOAA Education Plan and use NOAA assets, such as data, resources, expertise, or places. NOAA has a wealth of applicable products, data, and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts who can enhance student experiences both in the classroom and in the field. These resources complement the educator's strengths and augment the educational resources. Additionally, NOAA personnel can serve as important role models for career choices and stewardship. Reaching out to NOAA partners early on in the planning process will be most beneficial for consultation and collaboration.

> NOAA Education Plan (https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan)

> NOAA Resource Collections (https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections)

>NOAA B-WET Grantee Resource Collection (https://www.noaa.gov/education/resources?f%5B0%5D=filter_7_entity%3A1083)

>NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Resource Collection (https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers/resource-collections.html)

> NOAA in your State and Territory (https://www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/)

> NOAA in your Backyard (https://www.noaa.gov/education/noaa-in-your-backyard)

5. INCORPORATE ELEMENTS OF CLIMATE SCIENCE AND RESILIENCE
The K-12 education system is a well-positioned venue for instilling comprehensive knowledge, skills, competencies, and resilience around the most pressing environmental issue of today: climate change. According to the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, communities in the U.S. are experiencing changes in climate that are resulting in severe storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, extended drought, changes in ocean chemistry, marine heat waves, and sea level rise. Currently, educational researchers and policy makers are calling for climate change education that goes beyond knowledge acquisition and formal classroom teaching to efforts that reach audiences of all

demographics and incorporate the social, political, economic, and justice elements of climate change. Education has the power to help students develop meaningful personal connections to climate solutions, a sense of personal agency and empowerment, and ultimately impact their behaviors and decision-making in relation to climate change (Kwauk, 2021). Projects should incorporate age-appropriate elements of climate change into programming. The MWEE approach can be a direct means for students to develop climate knowledge, skills, and competencies to address climate change and climate impacts in their own communities.

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

Definitions related to climate science and resilience:

Climate change: Changes in average weather conditions that persist over multiple decades or longer. Climate change encompasses both increases and decreases in temperature, as well as shifts in precipitation, changing risk of certain types of severe weather events, and changes to other features of the climate system (USGCRP 2020).

Resilience: A capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant multi-hazard threats with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment (USGCRP 2018). While this definition is limited to a concept of “bouncing back” to a previous state that may be fundamentally unstable and unjust, ultimately, resilience should mean transforming to a more equitable and sustainable future state (Bey et al. 2020).

Community Resilience Education: Educational approaches that develop community-level environmental literacy to understand threats and implement solutions that build resilience to extreme weather, climate change, and other environmental hazards. Environmental literacy here includes the knowledge, skills, and confidence to: (1) reason about the ways that human and natural systems interact globally and locally, including the acknowledgement of disproportionately distributed vulnerabilities; (2) participate in civic processes; and (3) incorporate scientific information, cultural knowledge, and diverse community values when

taking action to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from environmental hazards, including mitigating and adapting to climate change (Bey et al. 2020).

Environmental Stewardship: The responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being.

6. ALIGN TO ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PRINCIPLES
Projects should be aligned to environmental literacy principles, as appropriate.

> Ocean Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts and Climate Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts guides:
https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy.html

c. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT PROGRAM PRIORITIES

None.

d. SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

None.

C. Program Authority

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

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

It is anticipated that approximately $750,000 will be available in FY 2024 to fund eligible applications among both priorities in the form of grants or cooperative agreements.

The total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed $150,000 for two-year (24 months) projects or $75,000 for one-year (12 months) projects. The minimum Federal amount to request from NOAA is $60,000. NOAA does not expect to consider applications requesting Federal support from NOAA for more than $150,000 or less than $60,000.

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.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2024. The period of awards may be for a maximum period of up to 24 months. Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire award period. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. It is recommended to include the flexibility of the requested start date in your project description.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of collaboration, participation, or involvement of NOAA in the management of the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if the NOAA B-WET program shares responsibility for management, control, direction, or performance of the project with the recipient. Specific terms regarding substantial involvement will be contained in special award conditions.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are: K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; institutions of higher education; community-based and nonprofit organizations; regional, state or local government agencies; interstate agencies; and Indian tribal governments. For-profit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are not eligible to apply; however, for-profit and foreign organizations and foreign public entities may participate as a project partner with an eligible applicant. Federal agencies are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners and may contribute services in kind. Individuals are not eligible to apply. While applicants do not need to be located in the targeted geographical regions specified in the program objectives,

the primary participants of the projects must be located in the geographical regions specified in the program objectives. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Pacific Northwest region is defined as Oregon and Washington.

The Department of Commerce/NOAA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. The NOAA B-WET program encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions as well as other organizations that work with underserved or underrepresented audiences.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program. Applicants may demonstrate cost sharing (including third party in-kind match) and program leveraging to support their projects, but this is not included in the eligibility or evaluation criteria. Funds from other Federal sources may not be considered matching funds and may not be used under this award unless expressly authorized by statute. All cost sharing or matching must be consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §200.306.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

No other criteria.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants are required to apply online through Grants.gov. You may access the electronic grant application for the Pacific Northwest Bay Watershed Education and Training Program at http://www.grants.gov.

Please note that applicants must locate the downloadable application package for this program by the Notice of Funding Opportunity number (found on the first page of this announcement) or CFDA number (11.429). Users of Grants.gov are now required to use a new application process called Workspace. For more information regarding this platform, please visit: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process

through Grants.gov.

If an applicant has problems downloading, please contact 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Applicants unable to effectively access application materials electronically should refer to a NOAA official listed in Section VII. of this Announcement to obtain the application materials.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals should follow the content and format described below. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the Pacific Northwest B-WET, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Some helpful resources for applicants can be found here: http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/apply#APP

a. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

All pages should be single-spaced and should be composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper. The project description should not exceed 15 pages, exclusive of project summary, literature cited, budget information (including indirect cost rate), resumes of investigator(s), letters of commitment, National Environmental Policy Act questionnaire, and federal forms. Any attachment included in an electronic application should meet the above format requirement when printed out.

All documents submitted as electronic application elements should be PDF (rather than MS Word, Excel, MOV, or other files types).

Full applications, which are submitted through the www.Grants.gov website, should include a maximum of four files (PDF files only) in addition to the federal application forms:

1. One-page Project Summary

2. Project Description (not to exceed 15 pages total)

3. Budget table, budget narrative (including sub-award details), and the negotiated IDC rate agreement, if applicable)

4. Supplemental information – all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as

resumes, Environmental Literacy Model (see a sample template at https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-guide), letters of commitment, literature cited, and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire (if applicable)

b. CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

1. REQUIRED FORMS

The following Federal Forms are required and must be submitted with applications:

>Standard Form 424 - Application for Federal Assistance
>Standard Form 424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs
>Standard Form 424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs
>Standard Form LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
>Form CD-511 - Certification Regarding Lobbying

2. APPLICATION PACKAGE

The following information should be included in your application package:

2.1. PROJECT SUMMARY (1-page limit)

It is critical that the project summary accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements and objectives of the activities. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read the summary and grasp your plan.

The project summary should include:
>Organization title
>Principal Investigator(s) (PI)
>Address, telephone number, and email address of applicant and PI(s)
>Partner(s)
>Program priority addressed (please only pick one program priority, as this will be used for evaluating your proposal)
>Project title
>Project duration
>Brief overview of work to be performed during the entire project period including audience description information (i.e. areas served, demographics and school districts, grade levels, number of teachers/students to be reached) and brief overview of MWEE project (Driving

Question, Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, and Environmental Action Projects)
>Total Federal funds requested
>Total project cost
>Cost per student and teacher

2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION (15-page limit)

The project description should describe and justify the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described below in Section V.A.

>Need: Provide a statement that describes the need for this type of project. Why are you proposing this project? Cite studies or sources, where appropriate, that validate the need for your project. It should be made clear in this section that your organization's proposed project is not duplicating other efforts in your region.

>Target audience(s): Provide a discussion of the target audience(s) that will be served, whether the project will reach marginalized communities and/or children/youth; describe the demographics and vulnerabilities of the target audience(s) and use data to support these assertions; Identify specifically how many students and teachers are involved in your project and their demographics.

>Area(s) served: Give a precise location of the project and the area(s) that will be served, including schools, school districts, and counties.

>Objectives: Explain your objectives and your plan to accomplish these objectives. Include specific approaches to achieving those objectives, including methods, timelines, and expected outcomes. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible. Clearly explain how you will achieve your expected outputs and outcomes. Include a table that outlines how the project objectives are aligned to local learning standards, the NOAA Education Plan, and environmental literacy principles.

>Proposed activities: Provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken. Demonstrate how your project meets the criteria defined in the Program Priorities. Include details about MWEE activities, including the Driving Question, Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental Action Projects. Describe how you will incorporate climate science and resilience activities into your programming. Include a description of activities involving external sharing and communications. For Priority 1, outline how the project proposes to ultimately support the implementation of systemic MWEEs for students.

> Project Partners. Describe the project partners' roles and the coordination among project partners; Highlight partnerships with schools and school districts; Highlight any partnerships involving NOAA entities to facilitate use of NOAA assets; Describe how partnerships have been formed to engage marginalized community's residents and/or organizations; Highlight any partnerships with community-based organizations that will lead with equity. Reaching out to partners early in the planning process will be most beneficial for consultation and collaboration.
(Note: letters of commitment articulating project partners' roles should be submitted as a separate section of the application.)

> NOAA Assets: Describe what NOAA products, services, or staff will be used in program delivery.

> Participant recruitment: Provide a plan of action that outlines how you will recruit your target audience and identify incentives to be used such as teacher stipends and /or continuing education credits.

> Project-level Evaluation: Project descriptions should identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resources for Project Evaluation:
> The MWEE Audit Tool: Use the Audit Tool to determine if your project meets the full definition of the MWEE and to identify areas that could be strengthened. (https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/12_NOAA_BWET_MWEE_Audit_Tool.pdf)

> B-WET Student Item Bank and Guidance: Use this guidance and item bank to assess students' science learning, watershed literacy, and environmental stewardship outcomes. (https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/NOAA_BWET_ELE_Layout_Final_PDFUA_Accessible.pdf)

> National Marine Sanctuaries Education Project Evaluation Guidance: Use this guide for tools and techniques helpful in making informed decisions about B-WET programming. (http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html)

Some aspects of project evaluation may require institutional review board (IRB) approval. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine if this is necessary and report back to NOAA. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Human Research Protections website has resources to help you determine the necessity of IRB approval. You can find those resources at: https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/decision-charts-2018/index.html. As part of the project evaluation plan, applicants must provide, in writing, a description of whether or not IRB review will be sought and a justification if not. If the applicant determines IRB review is necessary, the applicant must include a timeline for IRB review, and no expenditures related to data collection may occur until IRB approval has

been obtained.

>Previous project outcomes: If your organization was funded by NOAA B-WET in the last five years for a similar project that is being proposed under this federal funding opportunity, please include a brief summary of the outcomes of that project and include a description of how this proposed project will support, strengthen, and/or expand the previous project, if applicable.

2.3. BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

In addition to the SF-424A Budget Information form, applicants should include a detailed budget justification, or budget narrative. If two years of funding is anticipated, the SF-424A and corresponding budget narrative should include details for both years of funding, broken down by each year of activities. In the budget narrative, include a per-teacher and per-student cost calculation for this project. Provide justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. Budget narrative guidance and a budget template can be found on NOAA's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary webpage https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/learn/bwet.html .

Also, applicants should complete and submit the B-WET budget template found at https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/learn/bwet.html.

Examples of budget proposals (including examples of SF424A and Budget Narrative), can be found at https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2021/Apr/FY21%20NOAA%20Financial%20Assistance%20Workshop%20-%20Budget%20Proposals.pdf.

All budget information submitted with the application should mirror the dollar amounts on required SF-424 and SF-424A forms. All budget items should be rounded to the nearest dollar - NO CENTS.

For any equipment, defined in 2 CFR §200.1 as "tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000," a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. For more information on equipment, see 2 CFR §200.313.

Applicants must include the budgets and budget justifications of sub-awards and information supporting the price or cost of contracts. Information must include, to the extent known, the name of the entity receiving funds, the location of the entity receiving the funds (e.g. city, state, and Congressional district), the location of the entity receiving funds (city, state, and Congressional district), and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract/sub-award. All sub-awards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §§200.331-200.333 for sub-awards, and 200.317-200.327 for procurements.

If applicants proposing indirect costs have a current federally-approved rate, a copy should be included with the budget narrative. Refer to Sections IV.F. of this Announcement for additional information about indirect costs.

Grant recipients will be asked to attend or host a two-day Pacific Northwest Regional B-WET grantee meeting to be held at a grantee site location (location will be determined by Pacific Northwest B-WET Program coordinator at least 60 days prior to meeting, and upon agreement of host site). Your budget should include $2000.00, in the travel category, as estimated funds for this trip (such as meals, lodging, airfare and/or other transportation including rental car, shuttle, or taxi). In lieu of travel, your organization may be asked to use the $2000.00 to help host the meeting at your site (to cover costs associated with additional staff time to help support planning, logistics, and a half-day MWEE field experience for up to 20 attendees). If the Pacific Northwest B-WET Coordinator cancels the grantee meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, then funds set aside to attend the meeting may be used to attend an environmental education conference, such as Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators (NAME) conference, or similar professional development opportunity.

2.4 SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

>Resumes (2 pages maximum for each major participant)

>Environmental Literacy Model: (5 pages maximum) Provide an Environmental Literacy Model (ELM) or similar document that illustrates how the proposed project will meet the full definition of the MWEE, including identifying curricular connections of the MWEE through academic standards, issue investigation where students engage in the essential elements of issue definition, outdoor field experiences, and synthesis and conclusions, and ultimately engage in informed action through a student-directed environmental action project. The document should include brief (2-3 sentence) descriptions about how the proposed project will address the following information:

* Defining the Learning Objectives and Curriculum Connection. What are the curriculum indicators, performance expectations, and/or student learning objectives? Are there opportunities to meet academic standards in multiple disciplines or content areas?

* Describing the Local Context. What is the local and life-relevant environmental issue, problem, or phenomenon that will serve as the context for learning?

* Identifying the Driving Question. What is the open-ended, life-relevant question that meets academic standards/learning objectives?

* Asking Questions and Defining Issues. What are supporting questions that students may investigate to further explore the driving question? List the supporting questions that cover your required curriculum content and lessons. Describe how you will guide students in developing and/or co-developing their own questions.

* Planning and Conducting Investigations. How could students plan and conduct indoor and outdoor investigations to actively address the supporting questions? What kinds of data could be collected to draw conclusions and make actionable claims?

* Analyzing and Interpreting Data. How could students analyze data (graphic, models, etc.) to reveal patterns and relationships? What could the process of synthesizing evidence look like?

* Constructing and Communicating a Claim. How could you guide your students through the process of developing claims based on their evidence? How may they communicate these evidence-based claims to internal and/or external audiences?

* Identifying Solutions. How could you encourage your students to identify and explore a variety of solutions that could directly address the issue? How will students make decisions about which solution(s) to implement?

* Designing a Plan and Taking Informed Action. What resources or frameworks will students use to create their plan of environmental action? During what time period will they execute their project?

* Evaluating Action. In what ways will students reflect on the action and determine the extent to which it successfully addresses the issue?

The Environmental Literacy Model (ELM) Template can provide consistency for articulating

this and can be found in the B-WET Educator's Guide to the MWEE site: https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-guide. Note: you may reference lesson plans or curriculum as part of the appendices but do not embed these resources into the proposal.

>Letters of commitment /Partnerships: Letters of commitment from each partner that is making a significant contribution to the project should be included with the application package. This should include letters of commitment from school or school districts, NOAA partners, and community-based organizations that will lead with equity, as appropriate. Describe how partners possess community engagement expertise if the applying institution does not. For Priority 2, to document the level of appropriateness of activities, official letters of collaboration from Indigenous entities are required with proposals (if the applicant is not an Indigenous entity themselves).

>Literature Cited: If references are cited, proposals should include a literature cited list.

>National Environmental Policy Act Questionnaire (if applicable): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Consequently, if your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at the following link (https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf) and include it as an appendix to your application. This NEPA appendix does not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit. Refer to Section VI.B.5. of this Announcement for additional information about NEPA.

>Data Management Plan: Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. The data management plan does not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit. Please see Section VI.B.f. for information on the data sharing section of the application. **If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are primarily for education and/or the practice of students making observations using scientific techniques/methods (e.g. measuring salinity of water with a refractometer, measuring percent vegetative cover using a transect, etc.) and are not intended to be shared with scientists outside of the educational program, applicants may request permission not to make data publicly accessible and obtain approval from the Grant Manager listed below, if funded. In this case, this element of the application should consist of a paragraph (under the heading "Data Management Plan") describing the intended use of

the data and that an exemption from data sharing is requested.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to (1) Be registered in System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://sam.gov/SAM/, before submitting its application; (2) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application.

Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in Office of Management and Budget guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, found at https://go.usa.gov/xPTZg. Guidance on obtaining a DUNS Number may be found at: https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

Applicants and recipients are required to 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. The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Electronic applications must be received by 8:59 p.m. Pacific Time /11:59 p.m. Eastern Time) on February 1, 2024 to be considered for funding. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration.

Applicants are required to apply online through Grants.gov. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

Additional information about Grants.gov submissions:

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov. Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov involves receipt of multiple email messages and may take up to 2 business days

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

If you experience a Grants.gov “systems issue” (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before an applicable funding cycle deadline, please (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization’s computer system or equipment are not considered “systems issues.” Similarly, an applicant’s failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered Authorized Organization Representative submits the application, or (iii) receive an email message from Grants.gov are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov “systems issue” is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed “systems issue,” NOAA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov at the time of application submission that are beyond the control of the applicant.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of E.O. 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOCs are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf.

F. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs - The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if your organization has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. If indirect costs are requested, indirect-cost-rate agreements must be included for the applicant

organization and the negotiated rate must be requested. If an applicant does not have an indirect cost rate and wants to include indirect costs, the applicant has up to 90 days after the award start date to submit an indirect cost proposal or cost allocation plan. Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414 “Indirect (F&A) Costs,” any applicant that does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.403 “Factors affecting allowability of costs.” If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions (see Section VI.B. of this announcement). The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Michele Mazzocchetti
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway, 11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Michele.mazzocchetti@noaa.gov

Construction is not an allowable activity under this program. Therefore, applications will not be accepted for construction projects. This includes the construction of new buildings, completion of shell space in existing buildings, renovation or rehabilitation of existing buildings, and construction or development of real property infrastructure improvements (e.g., site preparation, utilities, streets, curbs, sidewalks, parking lots, other streetscaping improvements, etc.). Alteration activities in support of an education project, such as the renovation of an educational exhibit or installation of a schoolyard garden space, would likely not be considered construction.

All costs must be reasonable, allowable, and allocable. Details about allowable costs can be found in 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles.”

G. Other Submission Requirements

Not applicable.
Applicants are required to apply online through Grants.gov. You may access the electronic grant application for the Pacific Northwest Bay Watershed Education and Training Program at http://www.grants.gov.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria for Priority 1: Systemic classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that promote climate resilience and include high-quality teacher professional development related to the MWEEs:

1.Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (25 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. The project's importance and/or relevance and applicability of the application to the program goals will be scored using the following measures:

Connection to watershed (5 points): Does the project make a direct connection to the watershed, coastal or ocean ecosystem through locally relevant science and environmental action activities? Does it address the interactions between natural systems and social systems and human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth systems?

Project need and target audience (10 points): How well does the applicant demonstrate a need for the project? Does the applicant define the audience(s) that will be reached, including their needs and barriers? Does the applicant include data to justify and support their description of the targeted communities? Are the targeted communities historically marginalized groups, students of color, students from low-income families, or those that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts?

Systemic MWEE Implementation (5 points): Does the project include systemic MWEE implementation where the entire student population in one or more grades within a school or school district will participate in all MWEE essential elements as defined in Section I.A,b.? If not, does the proposal include a practical plan of action to show it will ultimately lead to systemic MWEEs where the entire student population in one or more grades within a school or school district participate in all MWEE essential elements as defined in Section I.A.b (Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experiences, Synthesis and Conclusions, and Environmental Action Projects)?

Local context (5 points): Does the experience use the local environment and community as a context for learning and focus around a watershed issue, problem, or phenomenon pertaining to the Pacific Northwest region that is rooted in the unique culture, history, environment, economy, literature, and art of a students' school, neighborhood, or community?

2. Technical merit (40 points)

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

Objectives (8 points): Are the objectives defined in the proposal focused on the stated outcome(s)? How well does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives can be achieved within the proposed project period? What is the likelihood of the proposed project to ultimately support the implementation of systemic MWEEs for students and improve the general understanding and stewardship of the environment?

Teacher Professional Development (8 points): Does the project include more than 30 hours of professional development time? Is more than 10 hours of professional development time spent doing hands-on inquiry or engaging in action projects outdoors? If not, does the applicant provide a reasonable justification for the time proposed? Does the applicant propose a robust plan for professional development within the time that is available? Does the project describe adequate incentives that support teachers' abilities to attend professional development activities? Does the project describe how teachers will be engaged in Environmental Action Projects during the professional development program?

Environmental Action (6 points): Does the project include student-led, age-appropriate Environmental Action Projects that directly address the defined issue, problem, or phenomenon that the students are investigating?

Alignment to educational learning standards (4 points): Does the applicant demonstrate how the project is aligned to state and / or local learning standards? Does the proposal include details about where the project fits in the scope and sequence of school district curriculum?

Incorporates NOAA Assets (4 points): Does the applicant demonstrate how their project is aligned and supports the goals and strategies of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan (https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan)? Does the proposal provide detail on how they will incorporate NOAA assets, including personnel, curriculum, or other resources?

Climate Science and Resilience Activities (6 points): Does the applicant demonstrate how they will incorporate age-appropriate climate science and resilience activities into programming? Is the project aligned with environmental literacy principles, such as the Ocean and Climate Literacy (https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy.html), where

appropriate?

Evaluation (4 points): Does the applicant provide an effective project-level evaluation plan, appropriate to the maturity and scale of the project, to determine the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting the objectives, and inform decisions about future programming? Does the plan describe how the evaluation will be used? Does the plan define what will be evaluated and the types of evaluation planned? Are the methods for implementing the evaluation appropriate?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (20 points)

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

Experience (5 points): Does the application include resumes of the staff members involved in the project? Does the applicant demonstrate capability and experience in successfully completing similar K-12 environmental education projects in the Pacific Northwest? Does the applicant have previous experience working with the target audience?

Partners (5 points): Does the applicant describe the roles and responsibilities of the proposed partners? Are there letters of commitment from each listed partner? Does the applicant document collaborations with schools or school systems (if they are not one such organization)? If NOAA is listed as a partner in the proposal, is there a letter of commitment from that NOAA partner?

Community-based organizations (10 points): Is the applicant or any of their partners a community-based organization that serves marginalized groups, particularly minority communities? Does the application describe how the applicant or their partners’ expertise and membership position them to ensure equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities? Does the applicant describe the qualifications and experience of staff and/or partners related to competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming? Does the applicant describe a mutually-beneficial partnership that uses the strengths of the community-based organizations, includes shared goals and resources, communicates effectively, and collaborates on decision-making? Is adequate compensation provided to the applicant’s community-based partners and community members for the

effort they are contributing to the project?

4. Project costs (10 points)

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

Reasonable (5 points): Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request and is the budget request reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represent a good return on investment?

Direct programming (5 points): Is there a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students and teachers in contact with the environment? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the project?

5. Outreach and education (5 points)

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

Outreach (3 points): Does the proposal describe opportunities for outreach and education around the value of MWEEs and environmental education at events that engage school boards, public officials, parents, community organizations, other schools, and / or the media?

Peer-to-peer sharing (2 points): Does the proposal describe opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing for teachers, educators, and school administrators?

Evaluation Criteria for Priority 2: Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for K-12 students that appropriately involve Indigenous Knowledge and promote climate resilience:

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (25 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. The projects importance and/ or relevance and applicability of the application to the program goals will be scored using the following measures:

Connection to watershed (5 points): Does the project make a direct connection to the watershed, coastal or ocean ecosystem through locally relevant science and stewardship activities? Does it address the interactions between natural systems and social systems and human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth systems?

Project need and target audience (10 points): Does the applicant demonstrate a need for the project? Does the applicant define the audience(s) that will be reached, including their needs and barriers? Does the applicant include data to justify and support their description of the targeted communities? Are the targeted communities historically marginalized groups, students of color, students from low-income families, or those that are more likely to lose environmental education within their local school districts?

MWEE Implementation (5 points): Does the project include MWEE implementation where the targeted student audiences will participate in all MWEE elements as defined in Section I.A,b.?

Local context (5 points): Does the experience use the local environment and community as a context for learning and focus around a watershed issue or phenomenon pertaining to the Pacific Northwest region that is rooted in the culture, history, environment, economy, literature, and art of a students' school, neighborhood, or community?

2. Technical merit (40 points)

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

Objectives (8 points): Are the objectives defined in the proposal focused on the stated outcome(s)? How well does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives can be achieved within the proposed project period? Does the applicant include the appropriate partners to ensure that the deliverables of the grant can be executed? Does this list of partners represent the full set of voices for this work to be successful and sustainable?

Indigenous Knowledge (8 points): Does the proposal demonstrate substantial involvement,

coordination, and support from an Indigenous organization or government to appropriately involve Indigenous Knowledge into the MWEE? To document the appropriate level support and engagement from the Indigenous organization or government, does the application include an official letter of collaboration from an Indigenous entity?

Environmental Action (6 points): Does the project include student-led, age-appropriate environmental action activities that directly address the defined issue or phenomenon that the students are investigating?

Alignment to educational learning standards (4 points): Does the applicant demonstrate how the project is aligned to state and / or local learning standards? Does the proposal include details about where the project fits in the scope and sequence of school district curriculum?

Incorporates NOAA Assets (4 points): Does the applicant demonstrate how their project is aligned and supports the goals and strategies of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan (https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan)? Does the proposal provide detail on how they will incorporate NOAA assets, including personnel, curriculum, or other resources?

Climate Science and Resilience Activities (6 points): Does the applicant demonstrate how they will incorporate age-appropriate climate science and resilience activities into programming? Is the project aligned with environmental literacy principles, such as the Ocean and Climate Literacy (https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy.html), where appropriate?

Evaluation (4 points): Does the applicant provide an effective project-level evaluation plan, appropriate to the maturity and scale of the project, to determine the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting the objectives, and inform decisions about future programming? Does the plan describe how the evaluation will be used? Does the plan define what will be evaluated and the types of evaluation planned? Are the methods for implementing the evaluation appropriate?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (20 points)

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

Experience (5 points): Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Does the applicant document collaborations with schools or school systems? Does the applicant have previous experience working with the target audience?

Partners (5 points): Does the applicant describe the roles and responsibilities of the proposed partners? Are there letters of commitment from each listed partner? Does the proposal verify the communities' need and participation through letters of support from both the applicant's community-based partner organizations and the targeted schools, school district, or school systems (if these are not the applicants themselves)? If a NOAA partner is listed in the proposal, is there a letter of commitment from that NOAA partner?

Community-based organizations (10 points): Is the applicant or any of their partners a community-based organization that serves marginalized groups, particularly minority communities? Does the application describe how the applicant or their partners' expertise and membership position them to ensure equity and inclusion in environmental literacy planning activities or bridge pathways between in-school MWEE implementation and complementary out-of-school activities? Does the applicant describe the qualifications and experience of staff and/or partners related to competently engaging members of diverse cultures, providing expertise on existing environmental issues, creating innovative solutions to the challenges, and/or enhancing the local context/cultural relevance throughout the proposed programming? Does the applicant describe a mutually-beneficial partnership that uses the strengths of the community-based organizations, includes shared goals and resources, communicates effectively, and collaborates on decision-making? Is adequate compensation provided to the applicant's community-based partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project?

4. Project costs (10 points)

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

Reasonable (5 points): Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request and is the budget request reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represent a good return on investment?

Direct programming (5 points): Is there a significant percentage of the budget directly related to ultimately bringing students and teachers in contact with the environment? Are

requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the project?

5. Outreach and education (5 points)

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

Outreach (3 points): Does the applicant include plans for sharing best practices and lessons learned from this project?

Peer-to-peer sharing (2 points): Does the target audience share their findings, experiences, or results to their peers or their community, as appropriate, while honoring Indigenous Knowledge ownership?

B. Review and Selection Process

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

After the application period has closed, we will screen received applications to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see IV.D. Submission Dates and Times); were submitted by an eligible applicant (see III.A. Eligibility Information); address one of the priorities (see I.B. Program Priorities); include required content (see IV.B. Content and Form of Application); and meet the federal funding requirements (II.A. Funding Availability). If your application does not conform to the requirements and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be rejected without further consideration. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

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

Technical Review:

The purpose of the technical review is to evaluate each proposal’s technical merit via individual evaluations of the proposals. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. Reviewers provide comments (which are shared with applicants after the competition has concluded) and assign scores to the applications based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of this federal funding opportunity.

The Federal Program Officer will establish a preliminary rank order based on the average of the individual reviewers' ratings. This preliminary rank order will be used in the subsequent panel meeting where final funding recommendations are made.

Panel Review:

A panel review meeting will be held following the technical review process. The purpose of the panel meeting is to discuss the proposals in-depth and to get final funding recommendations from reviewers. This in-depth discussion may raise issues or answer questions that a reviewer did not have in the technical review, or it may clarify an issue. After discussing proposals, panelists will individually provide comments and a final score for each application, upon which a final rank order is established. If one or more non-Federal reviewers is used, no consensus advice will be given by the panel.

Up to two separate review events may be held depending on geography or type of applications received. Scores from separate review events will not be combined to establish an overall rank order.

The Federal Program Officer will brief regional NOAA leadership on the panel results and will include their input when making recommendations to the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official will make the final recommendations for the awards based on the final rank order and selection factors below to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate federal funding and execute the award.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, 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.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. Refer to Section VI.B.10., Review of Risk, for further information. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities.

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

C. Selection Factors

The Pacific Northwest B-WET Panel ratings will be provided in rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the following factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
   a. geographically
   b. by type of institutions
   c. by type of partners
   d. by research areas
   e. by project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.A. and I.B.;
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.

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

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during spring 2024. Applicants may receive communications to negotiate a potential award in late spring 2024. Funding is expected to begin August 2024. The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2024.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive electronic notification that the application has been funded from the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification will be sent by email from NOAA's online grants management system to the institution's Authorizing Official. The official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's online grants management system. The CD-450 award cover page is viewable at https://connection.commerce.gov/sites/connection.commerce.gov/files/media/files/2016/cd-450_april_2017.pdf. Also, each recipient will need to have a U.S. Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payment (ASAP) account in order to draw funds electronically.

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at https://www.commerce.gov/oam/files/2020-doc-standard-terms-and-conditions-0. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA in the award package may contain special award conditions unique to this program and the applicant's project, including conditions that may limit the use of funds for activities due to outstanding environmental compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award, such as due diligence documentation, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

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 collaboration duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement in the activities of each partnership will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

Project activities should not be initiated in the expectation of Federal funding until a notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Office. 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.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding (declined) or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements prescribed in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf .

b. UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to https://www.grants.gov/learn-grants/grant-policies/omb-uniform-guidance-2014.html.

c. THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE STANDARD 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 at https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy. In addition, applicants will be bound by 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.

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

e. 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 Web site at www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations website at http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf.

Consequently, applicants may be asked to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, number and species expected to be caught, 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 of 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. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases, if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the grants

officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment of any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

If your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at the following link (https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/grants.html) and include it as an appendix to your application.

This NEPA appendix does not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit.

f. DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN
Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. This Data Management Plan does not count against the 15-page Project Description page limit. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the NOAA B-WET Data Management Guidance provided below and will be considered as part of proposal review. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

Data Management Guidance to Applicants

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

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

Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements apply to the proposed project and will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan will be considered as part of the proposal review. Note that the Federal Program Officer may require revisions to the applicant's Data Management Plan prior to recommending the application for funding.

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

Applicant Data Management Plans should be aligned with the following Data Management Guidance.

Data Accessibility: The NOAA B-WET program recommends that public access to grant-produced data be enabled via an existing publicly accessible online data server at the funded institution is to be used to host these data (describe in application); or a public data repository appropriate to this scientific domain (describe in application). (Options could include: The GLOBE Program - http://www.globe.gov/ , CoCoRaHS Community - http://www.cocorahs.org/ ; Dryad - http://datadryad.org/stash , Figshare - http://figshare.com/ , DataVerse - http://dataverse.org/ , or Pangaea - http://www.pangaea.de/). Funding recipients will establish their own data hosting capability (describe in proposal).

Technical recommendations: Applicants should describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are primarily for education and/or the practice of students making observations using scientific techniques/methods(e.g. measuring salinity of water with a refractometer, measuring percent vegetative cover using a transect, etc.) and are not intended to be shared with scientists outside of the educational program, applicants may request permission not to make data publicly accessible and obtain approval from the Grant Manager listed below, if funded. In this case, this element of the application should consist of a paragraph (under the heading "Data Management Plan") describing the intended use of the data and that an exemption from data sharing is requested.

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

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

g. HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH
For research projects involving Human Subjects, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or an exemption determination will be required in accordance with DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions “Research Involving Human Subjects” found at https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy.

h. 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.

i. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)
In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law. In addition, 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.

j. CERTIFICATION OF TAX LIABILITY
If required under Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal

felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

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

l. MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS
The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

C. Reporting

Unless otherwise specified by terms of the award, performance and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.328-.330 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (see Section VI.B. of this announcement), and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period. Reports shall be submitted electronically via the NOAA electronic grants management system.

a. Financial Reports - Information about federal financial reports is available at: https://www.noaa.gov/organization/information-technology/grant-recipient-user-resources

b. Performance/Progress Reports - Suggested content and guidance related to Pacific B-WET performance/progress reports can be found here: https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/grantee-resources

c. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards. All

awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of $30,000 and over. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding Pacific Northwest B-WET Program or the application process, you may contact:

Jacqueline Laverdure
NOAA Pacific Northwest B-WET Grants Manager and Program Coordinator
NOAA Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Jacqueline.Laverdure@noaa.gov
360-406-2084

Bronwen Rice
NOAA B-WET National Coordinator
NOAA Office of Education
Bronwen.Rice@noaa.gov
202-604-1388

Or view https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/learn/bwet.html

VIII. Other Information

None.