ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY2016 Marine Debris Prevention through Education and Outreach Federal Funding Opportunity

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ORR-2016-2004627

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.999, Marine Debris Program

Dates: This funding opportunity requires a letter of intent to be submitted before full proposals will be invited. Letters of intent must be received via e-mail (as an attachment) no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT, October 26, 2015. If invited per the instructions in this announcement, full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EST, January 19, 2016.

Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline. Full proposals will not be accepted if sent via fax or email. Use of U.S. Postal Service or another delivery service must have a tracking number and a receipt, and must be received by NOAA within five business days. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected without further consideration.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Marine Debris Program, authorized in the Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1951-1958), provides funding to support eligible organizations to educate the public about the issue of marine debris through dedicated activities to prevent the introduction of marine debris. Funding for this purpose comes through the NOAA Marine Debris Program as appropriations to the Office of Response and Restoration, National Ocean Service. Projects awarded through this grant competition will work to address a specific marine debris issue by encouraging changes in behavior. Successful projects will also develop and implement activities to reduce and prevent marine debris by working with students, teachers, industries, or the public, and will engage these groups in active personal participation (e.g. a small-scale shoreline cleanup with students, other hands-on activities, etc.). Successful proposals through this solicitation will be funded through cooperative agreements. Funding of up to $750,000 is expected to be available for Marine Debris Prevention through Education and Outreach grants in FY2016. Typical awards will range from $30,000 - $75,000.

This solicitation is focused on efforts to prevent marine debris from entering the environment

through education and outreach. It is not intended for large-scale debris removal projects, deployment of catchment basins, or scientific research.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP), a division of the Office of Response and Restoration, leads national efforts to address marine debris. The mission of the NOAA MDP is to identify and solve the problems that stem from marine debris through research, prevention, and reduction activities, in order to conserve and protect our nation's marine environment and coastal economy from the impacts of marine debris as well as ensure navigation safety. Marine debris is defined as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 C.F.R. § 909.1). Marine debris can include land based items such as plastic bags, cigarette butts, foam take-out containers, or balloons, and ocean-based items such as derelict fishing gear and abandoned vessels. Marine debris is primarily the result of human actions such as ineffective or improper waste management, dumping and littering, or storm water runoff. Fishing gear may be lost from storms or accidents and become marine debris. The impacts of this debris are many and include wildlife injury and death from entanglement or ingestion, exposure to toxic chemicals which attach to or are in plastics, vessel damage, economic loss, and habitat destruction.

A principal objective of the NOAA MDP is to provide federal financial and technical assistance to organizations with the expertise to identify, evaluate, and execute marine debris prevention through education and outreach projects. The activities supported by this solicitation develop impactful, community-driven and cost-effective projects that improve living marine resource habitats through the formal and informal education of and outreach to stakeholders. These activities align with NOAA's mission to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources, and promote stewardship and a conservation ethic for NOAA trust resources.

NOAA trust resources include living marine resources and their habitats, including commercial and recreational fishery resources (marine fish and shellfish); coastal habitats; diadromous fish species; endangered and threatened marine species; marine mammals and marine turtles; marshes, mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs, other coastal habitats; Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). NOAA trust resources can also include marine habitats and resources associated with National Marine Sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves and areas under state coastal management programs, including Areas of Concern within the Great Lakes. NOAA is also interested in proposals for projects in urbanized areas; however, as with all other proposals,

such projects must have a primary emphasis on public education that benefits NOAA trust resources described above and must clearly lay out the direct links to such resources.

A second objective of the NOAA MDP is to promote marine debris awareness, prevention and tangible project outcomes by collaborating with diverse entities and groups. These include partnerships with public and nonprofit organizations, citizen and watershed groups, anglers, boaters, industry (e.g. commercial and recreational fishing industries, fishing gear manufacturers, other marine industries, and plastic and waste management industries), corporations and businesses, youth groups, students, landowners, academics, and local and state government agencies.

B. Program Priorities

The highest program priorities for this solicitation are prevention projects that aim to reduce a specific marine debris issue as a result of increased awareness, education, and outreach. Such projects will demonstrate meaningful, measurable, and sustainable ecological benefits to coastal and marine resources by preventing marine debris from entering the marine environment. Highly competitive projects will encourage changes in behavior to address marine debris in the marine and coastal (including the Great Lakes) environment. Such changes should be measureable and demonstrate meaningful connection to the project's education and outreach activities. Measuring project success and behavior change could involve pre- and post-project evaluations, a measurement of how many people will be reached and the effectiveness of outreach efforts, a measurement of how many people will be reached and the effectiveness of outreach efforts, or measures of debris entering the environment Applicants must develop and implement the proposed marine debris prevention project by working with stakeholder groups (e.g. students, teachers, industries, and the public) appropriate to the marine debris issue being addressed. Education and outreach activities are needed at all levels, from children and adults living in non-coastal areas, to coastal residents, and those who depend on the oceans for their livelihoods. Outreach strategies should be clear, strategic, and impart key messages, information and experiences to audiences. Since experiential learning techniques have been shown to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), the MDP is looking for a hands-on participation component in all project proposals (e.g. a small-scale shoreline cleanup or other hands-on activities).

Projects targeting K-12 and college-level students, inner city communities, fishing communities, and coastal tourism industries are priorities for this competition.

This funding opportunity supports efforts to prevent marine debris from entering the environment through education and outreach, as described above. It is not intended for large-scale debris removal projects, deployment of catchment basins, or scientific research.

Applications should indicate the expected geographic region where activities will take place in the Project Summary (described below in Section IV.B.). Projects that address a marine debris issue on a national level are eligible for funding under this competition; however, such proposals must demonstrate the merits of a national approach over a regional approach. All proposals should tailor project goals and objectives so that they increase marine debris prevention and are measurable within the geographic area of the project. Proposals shall also note whether activities fit into any existing national or regional strategic plans to address marine debris (e.g. the "Marine Debris Strategy for the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health," the "Great Lakes Land-based Marine Debris Action Plan," the "Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan", etc.) and describe how they do so. Projects taking place in marine protected areas such as National Marine Sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, or in special management areas such as those under state coastal management, in Great Lakes Areas of Concern, in National Estuary Program sites, in Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) or areas within EFH identified as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern may receive greater consideration.

Because funding is limited, proposals requesting support for large equipment purchases, to expand an organization's day-to-day activities or to support strictly administration, salaries, overhead, and travel without being part of a specific project will be a low priority.

NOAA encourages using digital media as an outreach strategy, however this opportunity seeks unique, innovative approaches and technologies (beyond developing a website or mobile phone application) that engage diverse audiences in marine debris prevention. Proposals that use existing NOAA MDP products, such as existing education curricula, are encouraged and should clearly explain how the project builds upon the existing product. NOAA does not encourage proposals to develop new marine debris study curricula unless the applicant can demonstrate a clear need for it. Projects that are duplicative of those that NOAA MDP currently supports or those that have been funded by NOAA, partner organizations, and/or other federal agencies may not receive priority.

Applicants should also note that the following activities, in general, will not be considered for use of federal dollars under project awards: (1) activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state, or federal law; (2) activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state, or local law; and (3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute, or regulation.

Applications addressing other types of pollution not fitting the definition of marine debris provided in Section I.A are not priorities for this solicitation and may not be considered.

C. Program Authority

Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1951-1958).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Funding of up to $750,000 is expected to be available for this grant solicitation. The actual funding amount available is contingent upon the availability of FY 2016 Congressional appropriations. Typical project awards range from $30,000 to $75,000. NOAA will not fund proposals with a budget less than $15,000 or more than $100,000 under this solicitation. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for any or all proposals. The number of awards to be made under this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications invited, the amount of funding requested by recommended applicants, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to NOAA by Congress.

NOAA anticipates that between 5 and 15 awards will be made under this solicitation. In FY2015, 13 projects were funded, ranging from $17,000 to $91,000. The total grant funding level was approximately $675,000, which was matched by over $900,000 of matching contributions. The exact amount of funds to be awarded and the number of awards made will be at the discretion of NOAA following pre-award negotiations with highly meritorious applicants. NOAA may request that a highly ranked applicant submitting more than one meritorious proposal combine all or parts of its proposals into one award. Publication of this opportunity does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or obligate all or any part of available program funds. Awards may include funding from other programs or agencies.

If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) be responsible for any proposal preparation costs. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for proposal or project costs if this program fails to receive funding.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications shall cover a period of performance between one and two years and must include a project description and a budget for the entire period. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be August 1, 2016 – applicants should consider this date when developing plans for initiating proposed project activities. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date due to potential delays in federal appropriations. Applications for renewal or supplementation of previously-awarded NOAA MDP projects are allowed, however any proposal to continue work on an existing project

will be subject to the competitive process and will not receive preferential treatment. In some cases NOAA may fund a project with incremental funding, usually in a multi-year format. If incremental or multi-year funding is awarded, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent time periods; additional funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to program mission and priorities, and the availability of funds.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements since NOAA staff will be substantially involved in aspects of the project. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, activities such as hands-on technical or permitting assistance, support in developing protocols (e.g., for data collection or monitoring), tracking the progress of removal efforts through site visits and progress report evaluation, discussing development of meaningful performance measures to assess project outcomes, and involvement in public meetings and events to highlight marine debris removal activities.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with the Marine Debris Act, eligible applicants are state, local, and tribal governments whose activities affect research or regulation of marine debris and any institution of higher education, nonprofit organization, or commercial (for-profit) organization with expertise in a field related to marine debris. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Interested federal agencies may collaborate with eligible applicants but may not receive funds through this competition.

Foreign organizations and foreign public entities are not eligible to apply. All projects must take place within the United States or territories or their respective waterways.

NOAA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of veterans, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in under-served areas. NOAA encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

Applications that have been submitted to other NOAA grant programs or as part of another NOAA grant may be considered under this solicitation.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

A major goal of the NOAA Marine Debris Program is to fund projects that leverage the investment of Federal funds with other contributions from a broad range of public and

private partners. To this end, Federal funds may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of a project under the Marine Debris Act. Applicants must provide a minimum 1:1 ratio of non-Federal matching contributions to NOAA funds requested to conduct the proposed project. In addition to required cost sharing, NOAA encourages applicants to leverage additional investment where possible.

"Cost sharing or matching" is defined by 2 C.F.R. 200.29 as "the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute)." Any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions, will be accepted as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching when the contributions meet the criteria listed in 2 C.F.R. 200.306. For example, matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include third party in-kind goods and services (e.g., private boat use, volunteer labor, etc.). In addition, applicants are permitted to combine contributions for allowable costs from non-Federal partners when they meet the criteria in Section 200.306, such as not being contributed as match for other projects, and being available within the project period stated in the application. Federal contributions cannot be used as match without a specific legal authority, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants may also choose to designate part or all of their Federally-negotiated indirect costs as match. Refer to Section IV. E. 2. "Indirect Costs".

If the match requirement cannot be met, the Marine Debris Act allows the NOAA Administrator to waive all or part of the matching requirement if the applicant can demonstrate the following:

1) no reasonable means are available through which applicants can meet the matching requirement and

2) the probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

Any applicant wishing to request a match waiver must provide a match waiver request letter or provide other language in the required budget narrative as a part of the application package being submitted. The request must contain a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, descriptions of attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the incorporation or local availability of matching contributions.

In accordance with 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d), NOAA has waived the requirement for local matching funds to applicants in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All applicants should also note that cost sharing is an element considered in Evaluation Criterion #4. "Project Costs." As such, if available, the inclusion of matching contributions is strongly encouraged.

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the cost share amount reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should carefully document matching contributions, including the names of participating volunteers and the overall number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to individual marine debris removal projects. Letters of commitment for any secured matching contributions expected for an award should be submitted as an attachment to the application.

The Marine Debris Act also allows the NOAA Administrator to authorize, as appropriate, the non-federal share of the cost of a project to include money paid pursuant to, or the value of any in-kind service performed under, an administrative order on consent or judicial consent decree that will remove or prevent marine debris.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Not Applicable.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants must follow the letter of intent (LOI) and full application requirements stated in this announcement, or they may not be considered. A letter of intent must be submitted in order to submit a full proposal, and you must be invited to submit a full proposal by the NOAA MDP.

Complete application packages for the full proposal, including required federal forms, general instructions, and supplementary instructions specific to the NOAA Marine Debris Prevention through Education and Outreach, can be found on Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). If the application forms and instructions for applicants cannot be downloaded from Grants.gov, please contact Tom Barry (tom.barry@noaa.gov, 301-713-4248 x161).

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants must follow the letter of intent (LOI) and full application requirements stated in this announcement, or they may not be considered.

LETTER OF INTENT:

The Letter of Intent (LOI) process is a critical step to determine if proposed projects are well-suited for this specific competition. Applicants must indicate clearly which priorities their project proposes to address, and how. Those applicants whose LOIs do not strongly align with program objectives and goals, as determined by the NOAA MDP, will not be invited to submit full applications. The goal of the LOI process is to streamline the review process by inviting full applications only from those applicants whose projects are most likely to support NOAA's implementation of the Marine Debris Act through the prevention of marine debris through awareness, education and outreach activities.

An applicant must submit a LOI and receive an invitation from NOAA MDP before submitting a full proposal. LOIs must be submitted as an e-mail attachment to grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov by 11:59 pm EDT on October 26, 2015 (see Section IV.C below). Please put "FY2016 Marine Debris Prevention Letter of Intent (LOI)" in the email subject heading. Do not direct questions to this email address; see Section VII below.

The LOI must provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the targeted topic. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length, single-spaced, 11- or 12-point font, with one-inch margins, and should include each of the components listed below. If these components are not included or the LOI is submitted late, the LOI may not be considered by the competition manager.

1) Applicant Organization;

2) Project Title;

3) Principal Investigator(s) Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email Address.

4) Project Description: clearly state the purpose of the project and summarize planned activities, duration of project, target audience, resources that are likely to benefit, and length of project.

5) Geographic Scope: list the states and/or geographic areas in which the project will occur.

6) Outcomes: briefly describe the anticipated products and outcomes the project may be expected to produce and an associated timeline. Include a description of how project activities will encourage behavior change and how such change will be measured.

7) Approximate Federal Funds Requested and Non-Federal Match Anticipated

FULL PROPOSAL:

APPLICANTS MAY ONLY SUBMIT A FULL PROPOSAL IF INVITED TO DO SO AFTER THE LETTER OF INTENT PROCESS.

The full proposal application form must be downloaded from Grants.gov. However, please visit http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/proposal-submission-guidance-applicants for helpful information on putting together and submitting an application to this funding opportunity.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply through the Grants.gov website, which is the clearinghouse for federal financial assistance. Applications submitted through the Grants.gov website should include only three files in addition to the federal application forms noted above: 1) the project summary, project narrative and data sharing plan, 2) the budget justification and budget table, and 3) all other attachments combined, including resumes, maps, and support letters. Adobe PDF files are the preferred format.

If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, or internet access is not available to the applicant, a paper-copy application must be mailed to the NOAA Marine Debris Program (see Section IV. F. "Other Submission Requirements" for complete mailing information). Forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511 paper-copy submissions must be signed by the application's Authorized Representative. PAPER COPY APPLICATIONS MUST BE SIGNED BY THE AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE. Paper applications should be printed on one side only, on 8.5" x 11" paper, and should not be bound or stapled. NOTE: applications must adhere to page limits and any pages that exceed the limit for each section may not be reviewed. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed. Full proposals will not be accepted if sent via fax or email.

Each full proposal application must contain the following documents, unless otherwise noted below:

required Federal Application Forms, including the following:

- SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A - Budget Information, Non-construction Programs
- SF-424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs
- CD-511 - Certifications Regarding Lobbying
- SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: (if applicable)
- Project Summary (described below, 2 pages or less);
- Project Narrative (described below, 10 pages or less);

- Budget Narrative (described below, 4 pages or less, and include a budget table);

- Data Sharing Plan (described below, 2 pages or less);

- Curriculum vitae or résumé of each of the primary project personnel;

- Maps with site location(s) highlighted, where applicable;

- Letter(s) documenting partner support; and

- Other relevant attachments important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project, such as summaries of regional marine debris action plans or project site photographs, or documentation about any permits necessary to perform the project (max. 20 pages).

1. Project Summary (2 pages or less):

A brief project summary must include the following components:

a) Applicant Organization;

b) Project Title;

c) Principal Investigator(s) Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email Address.

d) Project Description: clearly state the purpose of the project and summarize planned activities, duration of project, target audience, resources that are likely to benefit, and length of project.

e) Geographic Scope: list the states and/or geographic areas in which the project will occur.

f) Outcomes: briefly describe the anticipated products and outcomes the project may be expected to produce and an associated timeline. Include a description of how project activities will encourage behavior change and how such change will be measured.

g) Approximate Federal Funds Requested and Non-Federal Match Anticipated

2. Project Narrative (10 pages or less).

When writing the project narrative, applicants should understand the components of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. "Evaluation Criteria" in this announcement), as they

explain how proposals will be scored for the application to be competitive. The project narrative must not be more than 10 pages long and shall give a clear presentation of the proposed work. The project narrative shall include:

a) Description: a brief description of the type of marine debris to be addressed (i.e., derelict fishing gear, land based litter, derelict or abandoned vessels, etc.), and the education and/or outreach method(s) to be implemented. Clearly demonstrate the benefits expected to living marine resources, habitat, and/or navigation safety as a result of proposed project activities. Describe how the project is innovative.

b) Issue and Area of Concern: Describe the specific problems the project will address and the geographic area of the project.

c) Target Audience: Who is the proposal targeting and why (e.g. K-12 students, fishing industry, teachers, cruise ship passengers, etc.)? Describe how the proposal will effectively reach this audience and lead to behavior change.

d) Objectives and Goals: Describe short- and long-term objectives and goals including the expected success of the project. If the project uses an existing educational curriculum, describe the focus of the curriculum and how it will be used in the project. Indicate whether the proposed project is part of an ongoing marine debris regional action plan (if so, cite which plan).

e) Outcome Measures: Describe proposed outcome measures that will be used to track the success of the project. For example, tracking the number of participants involved in or students reached through a marine debris activity, pre- and post- surveys or tests to measure behavior changes to an education or outreach program, a project evaluation plan, etc.

f) Project Implementation Timeline with Milestones: Describe the anticipated project duration (between 12 and 24 months) and the timeline and milestones for completing project objectives.

g) Sub-Award Information: If sub-awards are part of the proposal, briefly describe the process that will be used to identify recipients and justification for that process.

h) Environmental Compliance: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires NOAA to analyze a project's potential environmental impacts, hence applicants are required to provide detailed information on the project's activities. Details about site locations, species and habitat(s) to be affected, on-the-ground project activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use of and/or disposal of hazardous or toxic substances, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, impacts to coral reef systems)) should be provided in the project narrative.

Successful applications cannot be recommended for funding until NOAA completes the NEPA process. Applicants may be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to accommodate such measures will result in denial of an award. Special award conditions may be imposed limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding NEPA compliance requirements. The type of detailed information described above is critical to evaluating the significance of a project and its readiness to use available funding. Applicants should also provide information regarding any permits that may be needed for the project. See Section VI. B.2. of this FFO for more information.

i) Organizational Structure and Project Staff: Describe the organizational structure of the applicant, and the qualifications of project staff. Include resumes of all key personnel. Also include a list of anticipated project partners; support letters indicating their intent to participate and identifying their potential contributions should also be included. If applicable, describe any previous NOAA involvement in and/or support for the project and include name(s) of any relevant NOAA staff.

j) Communications Plan: Describe plans for promoting the project activities and accomplishments to a broader audience, including methods to disseminate information on project accomplishments.

Participant safety is critically-important during project implementation. Proposals should demonstrate meaningful consideration for the safety of project participants during project activities. It should be noted that all funded projects will be required to have a written safety plan governing all project-related activities, especially regarding the safety and management of volunteers. The safety plan should consider safety at the site during and after project implementation and take into account potential safety concerns for current and future uses of the project site.

3. Budget Justification (4 pages or less, including a budget summary table)

The narrative budget justification should describe the budget information listed in the applicant's SF 424A. It should provide a detailed description of the total project costs, which include both the Federal and non-Federal shares, by SF424A object class. Each object class should be described in as much detail as possible. The object class breakdown should match those found on SF-424A. Budget Narrative Guidance can be found at: http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html. A budget table is recommended to be included as well, which should summarize the budget narrative.

The narrative budget justification should also indicate if the proposal has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, what amount has been requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal. The source of any matching funds, including applicant or third party in-kind contributions, should be explained. If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a summary budget for the entire project should be provided; any funding other than the proposal request and match should be considered additional leverage.

Proposals with a behavior change monitoring component should clearly describe and separate out any monitoring or post-project evaluation costs so that NOAA can evaluate the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of such activities.

The narrative budget justification should also indicate if the applicant is requesting a waiver of all match requirements, as outlined above in Section III. B. "Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement". As previously stated, in accordance with 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d), NOAA has waived the requirement for local matching funds to the insular areas defined above in Section III. B. "Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement".

NOAA assesses budgets to determine the reasonableness, necessity, and adequacy of proposed costs for accomplishing the project objectives, and performs a cost analysis to assure that costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable in accordance with applicable federal cost principles.

4. Data Sharing Plan (2 pages)

A data sharing plan is required for all projects. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information 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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. See Section VI.C. for more information on this requirement. A sample Data Sharing Plan may be found at: http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/proposal-submission-guidance-applicants

5. Other Application Submission Information

Applicants should not assume NOAA has any prior knowledge relative to the merits of the project described in the proposal. As such, proposals should include the relevant level of detail. Inclusion of supplementary materials (e.g., photographs, summaries of project designs, key diagrams, copies of secured permits) are strongly encouraged and do not count

toward the project narrative page limit, although supplementary materials should not exceed 20 pages. Letters of support from partners, local and state governments, and Congressional representatives are also helpful in demonstrating support for the project. Such supplementary information should be combined and submitted as a single file in the Grants.gov application. Files uploaded to Grants.gov should not have any special characters in the filename (example: &,¿,*,%,/,#', -), and should be limited to less than 50 characters.

C. Submission Dates and Times

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION EARLY.

Letters of Intent must be received as an email attachment to grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov, by 11:59 p.m. EDT, October 26, 2015. Please put "FY2016 Marine Debris Prevention Letter of Intent (LOI)" in the email subject heading. Do not direct questions to this email address; see Section VII below. Successful LOI applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal, notified by email, by the Competition Manager by December 1, 2015.

Only invited applicants may submit a full proposal. Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EST, January 19, 2016. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission - please consider this in your submission timeline. Applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service after 11:59 p.m. EST, January 19, 2016 will not be considered for funding. FULL PROPOSAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED LATER THAN 5 BUSINESS DAYS FOLLOWING THE POSTMARK CLOSING DATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Full proposals will not be accepted if sent via fax or email.

IMPORTANT: Applicants are strongly advised to submit in advance of the deadline. For all applicants, adequate time must be factored into application schedules for delivery of the application. Volume on Grants.gov is at times extremely heavy. If Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants may submit in paper format according to the requirements of this announcement. Applicants submitting paper applications should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications for federal financial assistance are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." All applications for funding under this competition are required to complete item 19 on the SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372.

To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses, and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Allowable Costs

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Currently, allowable costs are determined by reference to 2 C.F.R. 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards." All sub-awards are also subject to these federal cost principles. Award recipients are subject to 2 C.F.R. 200.317-.326 when implementing contracts under an award.

Any pre-award costs incurred before the NOAA Grants Office provides a notice of award are at the applicant's own risk. Typically, the earliest date for receipt of awards will be August 1, 2016. Applicants should consider this award timing when developing plans for proposed project activities. Consistent with 2 C.F.R. 200.458, pre-award costs are allowable only with the written approval by NOAA.

2. Indirect Costs

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. Applicants with approved indirect cost rates may propose a portion or all of their indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been Federally-approved and documentation is readily available.

A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. If the applicant does not have, and never had a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, a rate of 10% may be used to cover indirect costs associated with the project. See 2 C.F.R. 200.414. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or has an expired agreement and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate should be submitted prior to receiving an award. The NOAA contact for indirect costs is Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division; lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

F. Other Submission Requirements

NOAA WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE SUBMISSIONS. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY. Full proposal applications should be submitted through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Applicants should note that it may take up to four to six weeks for first time users to register with Grants.gov and the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with SAM. Applicants should allow a minimum of five days to complete SAM registration; registration is required only once, but must be renewed periodically.?

NOTE: Even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or its SAM registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration [CCR]) may need to be renewed or updated prior to submitting to Grants.gov. (Note that an old CCR username will not work in SAM; you must create a new SAM User Account to renew or update your registration). 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. Any applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use SAM. For further information please visit the SAM web portal (http://www.sam.gov). See also 2 C.F.R. 25. Electronic submission is encouraged.Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.?

In addition, the Grants.gov validation process for a submitted application can take up to two business days to complete following submission through Grants.gov. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. Please plan your time accordingly to avoid late submissions as such submissions will be rejected.?

If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, or internet access is not available to the applicant, a paper-copy full proposal application package (as outlined in Section IV. B. "Content and Form of Application") must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 p.m. EST, November 2, 2015. Mailed applications must have a tracking number. The mailing address for paper applications is:

Tom Barry, NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, ATTN: MDP Project Applications, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4 Rm. 10239 N/ORR5, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

LETTERS OF INTENT EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Letters of Intent will be reviewed to ascertain whether the proposal has the potential to address marine debris prevention through education or outreach activities that meet the highest priorities of this FFO. These priorities include 1) encouraging changes in behavior to address a specific, identified marine debris issue; 2) developing and implementing activities to prevent marine debris working with students, teachers, industries, or the public; and, 3) engaging participants in effective, hands-on activities.

NOAA MDP will assesses whether the proposed education and outreach approach is appropriate, and focused on priority marine debris issues, and whether the letter clearly explains how project activities will be carried out. The LOI will also be evaluated to determine the potential for the project to change behavior among the public and other stakeholders to prevent marine debris, and the likelihood of achieving success.

Specifically, LOIs will be evaluated using the following criteria and weighting:

- The extent to which the project would address marine debris prevention through education or outreach activities that meet the priorities as described in this FFO. This includes the potential of the project to encourage changes in behavior to address a specific, identified marine debris issue, and whether the project engages project participants in effective, hands-on activities. (50%)

- Whether the LOI clearly identifies appropriate goals and objectives, and whether the general timelines for the project are reasonable. Reviewers will consider the potential for the project to deliver tangible, specific results that are measurable within the proposed time-frame. (30%)

- Whether the proposal will implement an appropriate outreach strategy for the project. This includes whether the proposal identifies a target audience and has a tailored approach to that audience; whether project activities will broaden the targeted audience's understanding of the marine debris problem; whether the project will effectively encourage them to be environmental stewards, and ultimately prevent marine debris from entering the environment. If a project proposes to develop a marine debris educational curriculum or other educational product, proposals should demonstrate why there is a clear need for doing so instead of using existing products. (20%)

The NOAA MDP may use the Selection Factors described in Section V.C. below during the LOI process to determine final invitations.

FULL PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Technical reviewers will assign scores to proposals ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that address the issues contained in these criteria are likely to be more competitive.

1) Importance and Applicability of Proposal (25 points):

This criterion ascertains whether the proposed work is relevant to the goals set out by the NOAA Marine Debris Program in this Federal Funding Opportunity. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- The extent to which the proposal addresses marine debris prevention through education or outreach activities that meet the priorities as described in this FFO, including 1) encouraging changes in behavior to address a specific, identified marine debris issue; 2) developing and implementing activities to prevent marine debris working with students, teachers, industries, or the public; and, 3) engaging project participants in effective, hands-on activities. (15 points)

- Whether the proposal has the potential to prevent and reduce the adverse impacts of marine debris on marine life and their habitats, including protected species. (5 points)

- Whether the proposed activity fits into an existing regional or national marine debris strategic plan (e.g. the "Marine Debris Strategy for the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health," the "Great Lakes Land-based Marine Debris Action Plan," the "Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan", etc.). (4 points)

- Whether the proposal includes a Data Sharing Plan that describes how data and information collected during the project will be made accessible and independently understandable to general users in a timely manner. (1 point)

2) Technical and Scientific Merit (20 points):

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Whether the proposal clearly identifies goals and objectives, and whether the timelines for the project are reasonable. Reviewers will also consider whether the project will deliver tangible, specific results that are measurable within the proposed time-frame. (10 points)

- Whether the project will meet all federal, state, and local environmental laws. Projects that would require permits and consultations should list all necessary permits required to complete the project. This should include the appropriate contact information for each permitting agency, documentation of all permits already secured for the project, and an expected timeline for those permits not yet acquired. Similarly, if the project takes place on private property, a letter of commitment from the appropriate landowner is required. Applications submitted with evidence of completed environmental assessments, completed consultations and/or secured permits, and that demonstrate that proposed debris removal activities are legally permissible in the project area, if applicable, are likely to score higher on this criterion. See Section VI. B. "Administrative and National Policy Requirements" for more information. (5 points)

- Whether the proposed methods and approaches to be used in the project are valid to achieve project goals from a biological, ecological, and safety perspective. (5 points)

3) Overall Qualification of Applicant (15 points):

This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant has the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- The qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or recipients in designing, implementing, and effectively managing and overseeing projects. Examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the implementation team are encouraged. If that is not possible, applicants will be evaluated on their potential to effectively manage and oversee all project phases, demonstrated by the level of education, training, and/or experience of primary project participants. (5 points)

- The overall organization's capacity to administer the award. This includes the facilities and/or administrative resources and capabilities that are available to the applicant to support and successfully manage grant responsibilities. (5 points)

- Whether appropriate partners from other agencies and institutions are collaborating on the project to broaden the project's impact . The proposal should include letters of support from the partners who have committed to collaborate on the project; for projects that intend to work with school groups, this includes letters from teachers or administrators. Letters of support from local and state governments, and Congressional representatives or relevant resource agency personnel familiar with the issue are also helpful in demonstrating support for the project.. If the project takes place within a protected or otherwise managed public area, a letter of commitment from the appropriate resource management agency is required. (5 points)

4) Project Costs (20 points):

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. If funds are requested for partial support of a project, the budget will be examined with respect to the overall project budget to allow an informed determination of a project's readiness and cost-benefit ratio. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- Whether the proposal budget is appropriate given the goals and timeline of the project, and allocable to all phases of project implementation and administration. Applications that don't identify a specific issue or project but propose to use NOAA funds to expand an organization's day-to-day administrative activities are unlikely to obtain a high score under this criterion. The proposal should contain a detailed breakdown of personnel roles including hours and costs by task. (8 points)

- Whether the proposal budget narrative is sufficiently detailed and effectively describes both federal and non-federal shares by object class as listed on form SF-424A. Applicants should also include a description of specific activities for which federal funding will be used by object class within the budget narrative. Requests for equipment (any single piece of equipment costing $5,000 or more) such as vehicles, boats, and similar items will be a low priority and a comparison with rental costs should be used to justify the need to purchase. (5 points)

- Whether the proposal budget narrative includes sufficient matching contributions. NOAA requires a non-federal cost-share at a minimum 1:1 ratio, except for those proposals eligible for a waiver according to Section III. B. "Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements." Matching contributions should improve cost-effectiveness and further encourage partnerships among government, industry, and academia. Applicants that document secured match are likely to score higher on this criterion. (5 points)

- The proposal demonstrates a critical need for NOAA funding and support. (2 points)

5) Outreach and Education (20 points):

This criterion assesses whether the proposed activities provide a focused education and outreach strategy to the public and other stakeholders to prevent marine debris, and clearly explains how this will be executed. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- Whether the proposal will implement an appropriate outreach strategy for the project. This includes whether the proposal identifies a target audience and has a tailored approach to that audience; whether project activities will broaden the targeted audience's understanding of the marine debris problem; whether the project will effectively encourage them to be environmental stewards, and ultimately prevent marine debris from entering the environment. If a project proposes to develop a marine debris educational curriculum or

other educational product, proposals should demonstrate why there is a clear need for doing so instead of using existing products. (15 points)

- Whether the proposal includes an external communications plan for promoting the project activities and accomplishments to a broader audience, including methods to disseminate information on project goals, results, project partners and their roles, sources of funding and other support provided. (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Letters of Intent and full proposal applications will be screened to determine if they are eligible, complete and responsive to this funding announcement. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application with a minor administrative discrepancy that can be easily rectified or cured. Eligible proposals will then undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process.

Letters of Intent and full proposal applications will be evaluated by at least three professionally and technically qualified reviewers according to the evaluation criteria and weights described in this solicitation. Reviewers may include NOAA officials, officials from other Federal agencies and state agencies with subject matter expertise, (e.g., coastal management agencies and fish and wildlife agencies), and other private and public sector experts. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score and/or recommendation. Reviewers may discuss applications with each other, but scoring will be on an individual basis and no consensus advice will be given. For the final full proposal selection process, reviewer comments, project scores, and a rank order will be presented to the NOAA Marine Debris Program Selecting Official. The Selecting Official will recommend proposals for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division.

C. Selection Factors

Full proposals will be recommended in the rank order unless the selection of a proposal out of rank order is justified based on one or more selection factors described below. The final invitation list based on the review of Letters of Intent may also be determined using any combination of the following factors:

1. The availability of funding
2. The balance/distribution of funds
    a. Geographically
    b. By institution type
    c. By partner type

d. By habitat type

e. By debris type

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA, partner organizations, and/or other federal agencies

4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Sections I.A and B of this FFO

5. The applicant's prior award performance

6. Partnerships and/or 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 NOAA Grants Management Division.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored proposals. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified as soon as possible that their proposal was not among those recommended for funding. At the request of the applicant, NOAA MDP can provide a summary of comments and reviewer recommendations once all final award decisions have been made. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file until in accordance with the policies set forth in the Department of Commerce Grants Manual, which in general is 3 years.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applications generally will be identified by May 1, 2016 and notifications to all applicants are anticipated to be made as soon as possible thereafter. Typically, the earliest start date for projects will be August 1, 2016, dependent on the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, NEPA analysis and documentation supporting cooperative agreement activities. Applicants should consider this timeline when developing requested start dates for proposed project activities.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, final scope of activities, project duration, and specific NOAA substantial involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA program staff. Projects should not be initiated in

expectation of federal funding until a notice of award is received from the NOAA Grants Management Division. Award notification will be made electronically from the NOAA Grants Management Division via Grants Online, NOAA's online grants management program. The award cover page, i.e., CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, is available at http://go.usa.gov/SNMR.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Administrative Requirements

Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions: Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in Grants Online at http://www.ago.noaa.gov and at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj. If the Department of Commerce publishes revised Standard Terms and Conditions prior to issuance of awards under this solicitation, the revised Standard Terms and Conditions will apply.

Special Award Conditions: In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division in the Grants Online award package may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable, such as the required use of the NOAA Marine Debris Program Performance Progress Report approved by OMB under control number 0648-0718 for submitting semi-annual progress reports.

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements: Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

Department of Commerce (DOC) Pre-Award Notification Requirements: 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.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information

which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

Delinquent Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions: In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives making a certification about whether the corporation has Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

Limitation of Liability: In no event will NOAA or the DOC be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards. This program is subject to the availability of funds.

Universal Identifier: 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 of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2013), http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03addd6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1300&rgn=div8

Executive Order 12866: This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Data Sharing Plan: Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

As described in Section IV.B.4. of this FFO, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the proposal. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information 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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The

Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -Importance and Applicability of Proposal. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

Information on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Policy is available under: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.pdf

Grants Management Division Approval: NOAA reserves the right to negotiate the budget and scope of work with any applicant that has been selected for an award, which may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NOAA may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NOAA may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application. NOAA may ask applicants to work with other applicants or may delay projects given program objectives or funding considerations.

After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official and prior to the issuance of an award, the NOAA Grants Management Division will conduct an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualification 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 correspond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.207. 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 the applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NOAA Grants Officer are final.

2. NEPA Requirements

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals seeking NOAA funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the NOAA

NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's award package, and under their description of program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do will result in denial of an application.

Applicants proposing marine debris removal activities that cannot be categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis or that are not covered by the NOAA Marine Debris Program's Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be informed after the peer review stage and may be asked to help prepare an EA prior to an award being made or provide for NOAA review a copy of an EA that covers proposed activities, if one exists. The NOAA Marine Debris Program PEA and FONSI can be found on the NOAA Marine Debris Program website: http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/mdp_pea.pdf.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposed activities to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests for or approvals of required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA Marine Debris Program staff to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division along with the recommendation for funding for selected applications.

C. Reporting

Progress reports are due semi-annually and cover 6 month periods. Progress reports are to be submitted to NOAA via NOAA's Grants Online system and are due no later than 30 days after each 6 month project period ends. A final report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award. Progress reports may be required to be submitted using a specific format for narrative information. The project progress report template will be

provided by the NOAA MDP. Financial reports cover the periods from October 1 to March 31 (due by April 30) and April 1 to September 30 (due by October 30) throughout the award period and are submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division via NOAA Grants Online system. Complete details on reporting requirements will be provided to successful applicants in the award documentation provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division in the Grants Online award package.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

For further information contact Tom Barry (tom.barry@noaa.gov, 301-713-4248 x161).

VIII. Other Information

Not Applicable