National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Land Acquisition and Construction Program for Fiscal Year 2018

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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: National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Land Acquisition and Construction Program for Fiscal Year 2018

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2018-2005340

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.420, Coastal Zone Management Estuarine Research Reserves

Dates: Complete grant applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, February 1, 2018

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS or System) consists of estuarine areas of the United States and its territories designated and managed for research and educational purposes. Each Reserve within the system is chosen to represent a different bio-geographic region and to include a variety of ecosystem types in accordance with the classification scheme of the national program as specified in 15 CFR Part 921. By funding Reserve lead agencies and universities to conduct land acquisition and construction projects that support the NERRS mission, NOAA will strengthen protection of key land and water areas, enhance long-term protection of Reserve areas for research and education, and provide for facility and exhibit construction that meet the highest sustainable design standards possible.

NOAA anticipates approximately $1.7 million in Fiscal Year 2018 will be available to designated lead Reserve agencies or universities in coastal states for approximately 1-10 construction and acquisition projects, and expected to range from approximately $20,000 to $800,000 per project and with project periods typically covering 12-36 months, depending on the availability of funds.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS or System) consists of estuarine areas of the United States and its territories designated and managed for research and educational purposes. Each Reserve within the system is chosen to represent a different bio-geographic region and to include a variety of ecosystem types in accordance with the classification scheme of the national program as specified in 15 CFR 921. By funding designated Reserve agencies and universities to conduct land acquisition and construction projects that support the NERRS mission, NOAA will strengthen protection of key land and water areas, enhance long-term protection of Reserve areas for research and education, and provide for facility and exhibit construction that meet the highest sustainable design standards possible.

NOAA provides funding to designated Reserve agencies for acquiring additional property interests and for construction projects that serve to strengthen protection of reserve key land and water areas; to enhance long-term protection of reserve areas for research and education; and provide for facility and exhibit construction. Each Reserve supports a wide range of beneficial uses important to ecological, economic, recreational, and aesthetic values, which are dependent upon the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem. The sites provide habitats for a wide range of ecologically and commercially important species of fish, shellfish, birds, and other aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Each Reserve has been designated to ensure its effectiveness as a conservation unit and as a site for long-term research and monitoring. In maintaining their effectiveness, the Reserves may find it necessary to expand their boundaries through strategically planned land acquisitions and/or to develop or enhance their reserve facilities, including their in-situ monitoring infrastructure, to meet the demands of research, monitoring, and education program objectives.

Within the NERRS, Construction and/or acquisition plans require the following information:

1) A construction plan must include general descriptions of proposed projects and general cost estimates. Sufficient information should be provided for both major and minor proposed construction projects to clearly articulate requirements in the initial phase of the project. See 15 CFR 921.13(a)(6).

2) An acquisition plan must identify the ecologically key land and water areas of the Reserve, rank these areas according to their relative importance, describe the methods of

acquisition, and include a strategy for establishing adequate long-term state control over these areas sufficient to provide protection for reserve resources to ensure a stable environment for research. See 15 CFR 921.13(a)(7).

B. Program Priorities

With the exception of lands to be acquired for reserve facility construction, priority will be given to projects that increase ecosystem resiliency and factor anticipated climate change effects. With regard to acquisition, priority will be given to those projects that address the following adaptation principles: (i) connecting habitats to facilitate habitat and species migrations; (ii) reducing existing stressors that hinder the ability of species or ecosystems to withstand climatic events; (iii) protecting key ecosystem features, e.g. keystone species or habitats; and (iv) maintaining diversity.

With regard to construction projects, priority will be given to core facilities (National Estuarine Research Reserve Standard Reserve 2004) that are proposed in already disturbed areas outside of the 100-year flood zone and minimally disrupt the environment; conserve and protect water resources; incorporate sustainable design principles (National Estuarine Research Reserve Sustainable Design Guidelines), optimize energy performance; and reduce the Reserve's greenhouse gas emissions and overall carbon footprint. Core facilities are those facilities that support the primary mission and goals of the Reserve and should be located near, and/or within, the reserve boundary, preferably in the designated buffer area of the reserve.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve Standard Reserve and the National Estuarine Research Reserve Sustainable Design Guidelines documents reference above can be accessed through the NERRS intranet https://coast.noaa.gov/NerrsIntranet/Default.aspx

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for the NERRS Land Acquisition and Construction Program is established under the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1461(e).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This funding opportunity announces that NOAA anticipates approximately $1.7 million will available to designated reserve agencies or universities for construction and acquisition projects in fiscal year 2018. Depending on the availability of funds, NOAA anticipates

funding approximately 1-10 projects. Funding for land acquisition and construction awards are expected to range between approximately $20,000 to $800,000 depending on the size, location, and type of project.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to establish any specific partnership or to obligate available funds for partnership activities. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce (DOC) be responsible for any proposal preparation costs. There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for project costs if this program fails to receive funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, the applicant does so at its own risk of not receiving an award or these costs not being included in a subsequent award. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Applicants must be in compliance with all existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive federal awards in order to be considered for funding under this competition.

B. Project/Award Period

The performance period for FY 2018-funded projects cannot exceed 36 months. Applicants may submit applications covering a 12 to 36- month project period with anticipated start date(s) as early as July 1, 2018 or as late as November 1, 2018. The Federal share of project funding will be fully obligated at the time of award and are subject to payment provisions outlined in 2 CFR 200.305 and further implementing award terms.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Land Acquisition and Construction Program.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are NERRS lead state agencies or universities designated to receive NERRS operations funding through a Memorandum of Understanding with NOAA in coastal states including the Pacific, Gulf, Atlantic Coast and Great Lakes. Eligible applicants should meet requirements as stated in the NERRS regulations codified at 15 CFR 921.32 which are available online at http://go.usa.gov/xkGEf.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners. Federal agencies and employees' 'in-kind' services cannot be considered as part of an applicant's match on shared costs. If federal agencies are collaborators, applicants are expected to provide detail on the planned level of federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to partnership services; serving in a review capacity; or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

The amount of Federal funds requested must be matched by the applicant as follows: 30 percent total project match for construction awards and 50 percent total project match for land acquisition awards as indicated in 15 CFR Part 921.31. Recipient contributions and third party in-kind contributions directly benefiting the project may be used to satisfy the matching requirements. If using previously acquired reserve land as match, a list of this "banked" match, and a description of the method of valuation of the cost consistent with 2 CFR 200.306(d),(h), or (i) should be included in the application. Applicants must identify all match sources and amounts equal to that requested above. Projects without match or with highly speculative match will not be considered eligible (see Section V.A.4. of this federal funding opportunity (FFO).

"Cost sharing or matching" is defined by 2 CFR 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 of goods and services, will be accepted as part of an applications cost sharing or matching when they meet all of the following criteria listed in 2 CFR 200.306(b):

(1) Are verifiable from the non-federal entity's records;
(2) Are not included as contributions for any other federal award;
(3) Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;
(4) Are allowable under Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part;
(5) Are not paid by the federal Government under another federal award, except where the federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other federal programs;
(6) Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the federal awarding agency; and
(7) Conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable.

Matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include third party in-kind goods and services such as private boat use and volunteer labor. Goods and services provided by the recipient have the valuation described in 2 CFR 200.306. Federal agencies and employees' in-kind services cannot be considered as part of an applicant's matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from multiple non-federal partners in order to meet the 1:1 match requirement, consistent with the standards described in 2 CFR 200.306, and if funds are available within the project period stated in the application.

Applicants should specify the source(s) of match in their proposal and detailed budget narrative and may provide or be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to specific projects, and all other cash or third party in-kind contributions.

Applicants may choose to designate part or all of their federally-negotiated indirect costs as match. This may be convenient because the valuation of such costs has already been federally-approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to the "Indirect Costs"policies in Section IV.B.14 and Section IV.D. of this announcement.

In addition, any Program Income that may arise in the project may be put toward cost sharing or added to the project, consistent with 2 CFR 200.307.

The NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements identified in 16 U.S.C. 6403(b)(2):

1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and,
2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

In the case of a waiver request, the applicant should provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including 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 availability of match. Match waiver requests,

including the appropriate justification, should be submitted as part of the final application. Please address the waiver request as described in Section IV.B.11 of this announcement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Projects eligible for funding must be identified in construction and/or acquisition plans, within the most recent NOAA approved reserve management plans in compliance with 15 CFR 921.13. Acquisition projects that involve the potential to invoke eminent domain are not eligible for funding. Construction projects must occur on land under adequate state control either through direct state ownership or pursuant to a long-term lease between the Reserve and the landowner. See also the clarification on the meaning of adequate state control set out at 15 CFR 921.30(d).

Eligible costs associated for administrative purposes related to acquisition and/or facility construction per 15 CFR 921.81; see also 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. Cost Principles [for Federal Awards]. Facility and acquisition planning alone may not constitute a proposal, but planning and administrative tasks may constitute up to 20% of facility and/or acquisition costs within the proposal. These planning efforts may address, among other things, evaluation of sustainable features appropriate for reserve future facility needs and associated maintenance.

Construction or acquisition projects identified in an approved management plan, including small scale projects to support monitoring infrastructure such as boardwalks and monitoring platforms, as well as small scale habitat restoration activities associated with construction and acquisition, are eligible for funding per 15 CFR 921.31. However, routine structural maintenance including unscheduled and scheduled maintenance repairs of buildings, structures, and installed building equipment to correct deficiencies is not eligible for funding. This includes preventive maintenance to achieve the expected life of the constructed asset and installed building equipment. Per this announcement, funding may be proposed for preserving historic or culturally significant structures, preparing a site for facility construction or acquisition, installing an ecological demonstration project, restoring habitat impacted by construction activities, or for minor restoration or enhancement activities to improve properties being acquired (e.g., clearing of invasive species or hydrologic obstructions). No more than 20% of the total budget of a project budget (federal and matching share combined) may be applied to restoration activities associated with construction or acquisition projects.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard SF-424 application package is available online at http://www.grants.gov. If this is not feasible, application packages may be requested from: Matt Chasse of the Office for Coastal Management at 240-533-0808 or email at Matt.Chasse@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document.

All application materials should use a legible 11- or 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. The complete application package should include the following forms and documents and should be grouped in two separate files:

A project description (proposal), as described in the application component section below, should be limited to no more than a total of 15 pages. The project description should also include a title page and a table of content but these pages (title page and table of contents) will not count towards the project description 15-page limit.

Project descriptions that exceed the 15-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative (see element 3 of the component section below) before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Pages excised from lengthy applications will not be reviewed or considered. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors may not be understood effectively by reviewers, resulting in lower evaluation scores, so applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration.

Federal forms from the SF-424 Form family should include the following forms as applicable:
--Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)
--Budget Information for Non-construction Programs (for acquisition proposals): Form 424A (Within the award, a Form SF-424A for each year of funding will be required)
--Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
--Budget Information for Construction Proposals (as applicable): Form 424C
--Assurances for Construction Programs (as applicable): SF-424D
--Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
--Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., resumes, references, lists of relevant work products or reports, detailed methodologies, data sources, detailed budget information, letters of collaboration, letters of

support, lists of data sources, permits, and maps). Applicants should paginate their proposal and any appendices. Appendices should not total more than 30 total pages excluding forms, information to complete forms, detailed budget narrative, and NEPA and environmental compliance information.

Applicants may upload this additional supporting documentation, such as the resumes and qualifications of applicants, and letters of support or statements of collaboration, by using the 'Optional Form' box under 'Other Attachments' in Grants.gov during the application submission process.

Federal forms and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information, and information provided (e.g., Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement) to complete the federal forms can be separately submitted or combined and submitted in one PDF document.

Please keep in mind that the total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined shall not exceed 5 megabytes. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. For applications submitted in electronic format, acceptable formats are limited to Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) or Microsoft Word files. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

All applications should contain the following components:

1. Title Page with the following information:

a. Project Title

b. Proposed project period (start and end dates)

c. Type of Project (i.e., land acquisition or construction)

d. Recipient name (must match registered name in Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS)

e. Reserve Name

f. Recipient DUNS number (must match applicant information in SAM.gov)

g. Principal and other investigator (names, organization, and contact information)

h. Financial representative (names, organization, and contact information)

i. Identify the following aspects of the project including the: i) region and specific area where the project will take place, ii) partners or technical networks that will be leveraged or created, if applicable; and iii) identification of the programmatic priority or priorities identified in the NERRS management plan and/or strategic plan applicable to the project.

2. Project summary. Provide a one to two-page summary of the proposed project. The summary must contain the following sections:

a. Project name/title

b. Requested funding by year (as appropriate). Brief project summary including objectives, expected results and intended benefits and outcomes, and, if applicable, a short description of partners and professional or technical networks that will be leveraged or created.

3. Project Description (limited to 15 pages, excluding title page and table of contents). All project proposals should include the following sections:

A. Goal and Objective(s) - Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved. Goals and objectives must be specific for each year of the work plan presented. Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports in which progress against these goals and objectives will be reported.

Sufficient detail should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of proposed work to program priorities described in Section I.B. of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed scope of work raises any concerns with regard to federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

B. Background - Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project. Background information should summarize the problem, gap or need that the proposal addresses; the relationship of the proposed work to other regional efforts; and the importance of the project to the reserve including specific reference and page number(s) within the current NOAA approved Reserve management plan or draft revised plan submitted to NOAA for review; summary of NOAA/NERRS funds provided for construction or acquisition from FY12-FY17 with summary of progress; and any reference to the project in a CZMA Section 312 evaluation.

Applicants should address their qualifications for performing the project. Reserves may demonstrate in their applications that they have solid operating performance, preferably a full complement of core staff (manager, education coordinator, and research coordinator), and effective performance in completing past construction and acquisition projects. Applicants may briefly address how they possess the necessary experience, education, training, facilities, and administrative resources, to accomplish the project. The individual reserve should be capable of performing the project in general and supporting the project by

supplying the required match amounts (50/50 for acquisition projects and 70/30 for construction projects).

C. Approach - Provide a work plan that: identifies specific tasks to be accomplished; explains the technical approach (including quality assurance) needed to accomplish the tasks; identifies the roles and qualifications of staff, partners, and cooperators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. The description should align with budget categories and fully explain the scope of work including preparatory work, planning, design elements, sustainable features, etc. The description should address how the project will be resilient to climate change and/or reflect climate change related outreach. For facility retrofits, a description of the cost savings and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the sustainable design features should be included. See Section I. B. Program Priorities of this FFO. The work plan must clearly address data management requirements, and the steps to be taken to achieve efficient and effective data access and archive that is compliant with federal regulations. If the project includes federal partners, the roles and responsibilities of the federal partners must be clearly identified.

D. Task Outcomes or Products - Identify and describe the anticipated project products or outcomes. Explain how they will benefit the coastal resource management community (or local management of coral reef resources) and describe performance measures that will be used to evaluate project success. The narrative should include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also needs to include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation (or resilience), describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future

E. Milestone Schedule - Display time lines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.

4. Project Budget (Budget narrative and Justification). Detailed budget guidance provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division is accessible under: http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf

In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and a budget justification broken out by individual task. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each

calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project narrative for the entire award period. Please explain how categorical costs are derived in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to determine if costs are 'allowable and reasonable' according to the cost principles referenced in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. Budget narrative categories should correspond to the standard object class categories listed in Section B of the SF-424A.

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all contracts and sub-awards, and indicate the basis for the cost estimates in the narrative. Describe project activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each identified sub-award should include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:

- Name of identified qualified sub-recipient. Sub-recipient, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds and the location of the primary place of performance.
- Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
- Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed and the criteria for measuring accountability. Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
- Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget for sub-recipients or contractors if applicable under 2 C.F.R. 200.101. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the sub-award and the indirect cost rate used.

All sub-awards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.330-200.332 for sub-awards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Note that equipment is defined 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. See 2 CFR 200.33 Equipment, 2 CFR 313, and 2 CFR 200.317-326.

The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition

contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 CFR 200.317-326. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for any portion of travel, prior approval is required under the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section G.05.c., https://go.usa.gov/xRW4R, and therefore, such travel should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in an annual NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) workshop for recipients.

Refer to item 16 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative.

Federal and non-federal costs per object class category identified in the NOAA grants package (Form SF 424-A and/or C) and a brief narrative justification of the budget including the source of match (50% for acquisition and 30% for construction). Administrative and/or planning costs up to 20% of the federal portion of the budget are allowable. Restoration costs up to 20% of the proposed project are allowed for restoration or enhancement associated with the proposed (See Section I.B of this FFO). Cost categories for construction include: project planning and design; administrative and legal expenses; architectural and engineering costs; project inspection fees; site work; demolition and removal costs; equipment costs; and other construction tasks breakdown such as structural (i.e., windows, doors, roofing, flooring), carpentry, plumbing, heating, electrical. For acquisition costs: personnel involved in the project; land acquisition fees; travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual. A detailed budget narrative that includes additional information regarding the use of funds for budget categories found in Form SF-424A must be included in an appendix. In this appendix, the budget narrative also shall clearly identify the cost of separable elements of the proposed work and shall identify the elements of the project prioritized for revision or elimination if sufficient funding is not available for all proposed activities. For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will

be used in the project.

5. Appendices (30 page limit)

The following information should be included as appendices to the project description. Only material submitted as a single package will be reviewed. Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, letters of collaboration, resumes, references, lists of data sources, and maps). Provide résumés of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project that address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit résumés to a maximum of two pages for each key investigator.

6. Data Sharing Plan.

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

7. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA.

After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. 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. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

The applicants selected for funding must complete questions 1 - 19 of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants accessible at www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf 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).Questions 20 - 53 are not required with the initial application

because NOAA anticipates that most projects funded through this competition would not have impacts related to damage assessment and restoration or fisheries sampling and analysis.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/ including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations under https://www.coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf

8. Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance (7/2003 version or newer)

Applicants requesting Federal funding in this program must submit a copy of Standard Form SF-424, 'Application for Federal Assistance'. If a hard copy final application is submitted, it must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative, and used as the cover page for the final application. An electronic signature and date stamp will automatically be included on SF-424 forms submitted via Grants.gov.

9. Standard Form 424A: Budget Information for Non-construction Programs (if applicable) (include a separate form for each proposed sub-award of $25,000 or more)

Applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form to summarize the budget for the proposed scope of work. The first column of sections A and B shows the federal funds requested, while the second column of sections A and B shows the non-federal matching funds provided for the project. Total award funding is shown in the final column of section B. Non-federal funding is broken out by source in section C. Forecasted cash needs in Section D should be inclusive of all funding for the project. Both federal and non- federal funds should be expended at a similar rate throughout the course of the project. Section E may be left blank. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Please note that completion of the SF-424A form as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF-424A form. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives.

All sub-awards should also be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed sub-award budget.

10. Standard Form 424B: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
Applicants are required to submit a signed SF-424B, 'Assurances for Non-Construction Programs' for acquisition proposals.

11. Standard Form 424C: Budget for Construction Programs (if applicable)"
Applicants are required to submit a signed SF424C "Budget for Construction Programs" for construction projects.

12. Standard Form 424D: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
Applicants are required to submit a signed SF-424C, 'Assurances for Construction Programs' for construction projects

13. Standard Form CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying
Applicants are required to submit a form CD-511, 'Certifications Regarding Lobbying.

14. Standard Form LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
If applicable, applicants may be required to disclose certain lobbying activities described in form SF-LLL.

15. Permits and Approvals
It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. Applicants must provide a list of all known permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. You should include this required element even if permits are not required.
Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.

For work proposed within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other federally designated managed areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. For applicants who propose to conduct research or monitoring activities that may affect any coral species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, you will likely need an Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit.

16. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or Facilities and Administrative 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., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 CFR 200.56-.57 and 200.412-.415.

A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal Government should be included with the final application package. If an award recipient has never established an indirect cost rate with any federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR 200.414. Non-federal entities that have never received a negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rate elect to charge a de minimis rate at 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). The de minimis indirect cost rate should be used for all federal awards. Non-federal entities may use this rate indefinitely, but may choose to negotiate an indirect (F&A) cost rate at any time. This de minimis rate option is not available to state and local governments, and Indian tribes.

If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to establish a new negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award. See Section IV D for more information on indirect cost rates and establishing a new indirect cost rate with the DOC.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to build the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 note,to the extent applicable, any applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.Gov, which may be accessed online at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) be registered in SAM.Gov before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM.Gov registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. A federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM.Gov 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. See Section IV.G below and 2 CFR 25 at http://go.usa.gov/xZZn4.

Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (www.dnb.com) as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR 25, found at http://go.usa.gov/xZZn4. A recipient's DUNS number must correspond with the recipient's information in SAM.Gov.

Applicants should allow a minimum of thirty days to receive a DUNS number and to be registered in SAM.Gov, or to assure that required annual updates are complete. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.grants.gov.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications submitted for funding under this competition must be (1) received and validated by Grants.gov; or (2) postmarked or provided to a delivery service that provides a tracking number and receipt on or before the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on February 1, 2018.

If for any reason applicants are unable to submit their application through Grants.gov or are concerned about possible problems associated with the Grants.gov system, they may provide a paper copy of their full application by mail. Applications submitted by mail must include all relevant application elements described above, must include a SF-424 form with original ink signature and date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 11:59 pm Eastern on February 1, 2018; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. Please address all mailed applications to: Matthew Chasse, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Paper applications received more than 3 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed, and applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications.

Applicants should be aware that localized hazardous weather or other situations beyond their control impacting their ability to submit packages before deadlines may not result in changes to the application deadline.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications submitted under this competition are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's website < www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc >.

F. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

Applicants are permitted to request indirect costs if their organization has an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a federal agency that covers the period of the award. Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package.

If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with any federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR 200.414, as described in Section IV.B. of this Announcement. Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA DOC. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Lamar.Revis@noaa.gov

Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees, however indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee. Under 2 CFR 200.414 “Indirect (F&A) Costs,” any applicant that has never received a 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 CFR 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 DOC Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06.

2. Ineligible projects:
The following projects will not be eligible for Federal funding under this competition: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages under federal or state law; and (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

3. Cost Principles:
Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives and are determined by reference to relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements.

Recipients are subject to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles” and as well as any DOC implementing regulations that may be in effect at the time of award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as the costs are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

G. Other Submission Requirements

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov); and application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the “Apply” function on Grants.gov. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the SAM.Gov, and periodic renewals are required. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at http://fedgov/.dnb.com/webform. Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM.Gov registration. (Note: Your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form). An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete. In addition, it may take two days until the applicant is notified as to whether NOAA received the application, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date.

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using

Grants.gov must locate the application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.420).

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review.

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, one original set of the complete application and related SF-424 with original ink signature and date by the applicant's authorized representative shall be mailed to the attention of Matt Chasse at the NOAA Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Mailed applications must include documentation to demonstrate that the application was submitted prior to the application deadline, such as an official U.S. Postal Service postmark; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Paper applications received more than 3 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed; applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration and letters of support, shall be submitted together in one package.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to proposals ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Evaluation criteria in and weights for each criterion are below.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals. (30 points): This criterion is used to evaluate whether the project is appropriate under the definitions for acquisition and construction outlined in the regulations (CZMA (16 U.S.C. 1461(e)(A)(i)). These definitions state that funding will be provided for purposes of acquiring such lands and waters, and any property interests therein, as are necessary to ensure the appropriate long-term management of an area as a national estuarine Reserve)

and/or construction (construction or enhancement of facilities or exhibits, or associated infrastructure (as defined in Section I of this FFO)). Projects will receive a higher score that fall clearly within the definitions. The project should demonstrate intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For construction projects, planned core facilities projects will be given a higher score than those facilities not deemed as core. Those projects outside of the definition will rank lower (e.g., projects for routine structural maintenance, vessels used as floating classrooms, and boats capable of being routinely transported from land to water are outside the definition).

2. Technical/scientific merit (30 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. For this competition, this criterion is used to assess the opportunity gained by funding this project now and/or lost by not funding it now (e.g., availability of match or additional construction or land acquisition funds; option on a parcel of land; protection of a critical resource). Projects of greater immediacy are given a higher score. This criterion relates to whether the applicant is able to undertake the project. This criterion is used to determine how far along the recipient is in the acquisition process (e.g., contact with landowners, negotiations, title options) or the planning process for facilities construction (plans, design, etc.) and takes into account a feasible timeline for completion. For acquisition projects, the type of acquisition being proposed (fee-simple, easement, etc.) should provide adequate state control of the property to be included in the Reserve and increase the resiliency of the reserve ecosystem. For construction projects, those that have minimal impact to sensitive resources and incorporate sustainable features and/or construction techniques in core facilities will score higher. These include projects that demonstrate efforts to: optimize energy performance; protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality; or reduce the environmental impacts of materials.

Examples of sustainable efforts:

- Optimize Energy Performance

The proposed project: (a) improves energy efficiency and reduces greenhouse gas emissions of current or proposed structures, through reduction of energy intensity or through the use of renewable energy; and (b) to the extent feasible, implements renewable energy generation projects on its property.

- Protect and Conserve Water

The project reduces indoor or outdoor water consumption.

- Enhance Indoor Environmental Quality

The project employs low-emitting materials (such as materials and products with low pollutant emissions).

- Reduce the Environmental Impact of Materials

The project: (a) uses materials with recycled content or bio-based content; (b) minimizes construction waste; (c) uses paper of at least 30 percent post-consumer fiber content; (d) reduces the quantity of hazardous chemicals and materials acquired, used, or disposed of by the facility, (e) increases diversion of solid waste as appropriate, and (f) maintains cost effective waste prevention and recycling programs at the facility.

To the extent, relevant, NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nations natural resources. However, no points are assigned to an education strategy, or deducted if no education strategy is omitted.

3. Overall qualifications of funding applicants (25 points): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources, to accomplish the project. This criterion is used to assess how the individual reserve is capable of performing the project in general (based on information provided by the applicant in its proposal) and if they can support the project by supplying the required match amounts (50/50 for acquisition projects and 70/30 for construction projects). Reserves who demonstrate in their applications that they have solid operating performance and a full complement of core staff (manager, education coordinator, and research coordinator) will generally be given a higher score than those without those items. Performance in completing past construction and acquisition projects will be considered. An exception may be where a particular construction or acquisition project is necessary to conduct core program activities. New reserves need to demonstrate that they have, or have access to, the necessary capabilities and capacities to complete the project. An applicant is only qualified to submit a proposal if they have an approved current management plan and adhere to eligibility requirements.

4. Project costs (15 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This criterion is used to determine whether the cost estimates and budget are reasonable, realistic, and cost-effective for the proposed project. Higher evaluation scores will be given to projects that have realistic budgets and demonstrate cost-sharing by the project proponent. Projects without or with highly speculative match will not be considered. Applicants must identify necessary match (50/50 for acquisition; 70/30 for construction) and its source and that it will be available at the time the award will be made.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to assure that it is timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review

process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications that meet the minimum requirements will be reviewed by at least three independent peer reviewers during a merit-based review and ranking process. Appropriate mechanisms will be implemented to avoid potential conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. Each reviewer will be asked to individually evaluate and rank proposals using the weighted evaluation criteria above. Proposal evaluations will be based exclusively on information included in the application. Reviewers may discuss the applications, but if more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, final scoring will not be consensus. Merit reviewer ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

The Selecting Official, or their designee, may negotiate the funding level or other major aspects of the proposal, and the Selecting Official will make the final recommendation for award based on the 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, may ask applicants to work together or combine projects, may defer applications to the future, or may reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA GMD, and Office for Coastal Management officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA’s efforts to comply with NEPA and other legislation.

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 CFR 200.205. See Section VI.B., Review of Risk, in this Announcement. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant’s management systems, an applicant’s history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.

Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. 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 CFR 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 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..

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The final panel ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The competition manager will make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
• Geographically
• By type of institutions
• By type of partners
• By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors as described in section I.B of this federal funding opportunity.
5. Applicant s prior award performance: Unsatisfactory performance by a recipient under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding.
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 Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants will be notified in approximately March 30, 2018. The anticipated start date for grants made under this competition is between July 1, 2018 and November 1, 2018, dependent on funding availability, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA and environmental compliance analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final selection package has been approved by the NOAA GMD, which is expected to be approximately April 15, 2018.
Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA GMD by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant should be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

The official notice of award is the Commerce Form 450 (CD-450), Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have 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 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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification

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

2. Uniform Administrative Guidance
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.

3. Terms and Conditions
Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at http://www.ago.noaa.gov and at http
://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports.

4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
See the NEPA information in Section IV. B of this announcement. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if

NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment."

5. Federal Felony and Tax Certifications
When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any federal law.

6. Limitation of Liability
Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342, Remedies for non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.339.

7. 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. 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

8. 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.

9. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure 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.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR 200.327-.329 and DOC Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi- annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6- month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request.

A comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not

limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 90 days of the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's GMD and are up-to-date. In their final progress report, applicants will be asked to (a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project with respect to reserve program implementation and, if applicable, environmental conservation; and (b) certify that "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's GMD and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)."

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued. 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. See 2 CFR 170 at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory at the time of closeout and if applicable when otherwise required by Special Award Condition in accordance with the equipment requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313 and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

Recipients must inventory tangible property at least once every two years and at award closeout. When required by an award condition and at closeout, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must submit reports at least annually and at award closeout on the status of real property in which the federal government retains an interest, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an

appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

The program office recommends that if equipment under an award is no longer needed as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.313, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete an "other" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative and technical questions regarding the program and application process, please contact Matthew Chasse, program coordinator, at NOAA/Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, 10th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or via phone: 240-533-0808, email: contact Matt.Chasse@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

There is no guarantee that funds will be available for this Federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk. In no event will NOAA or the 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.

If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn.

Applicants shall not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files may not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

The paper copy submission process is an option for applicants in remote island or office locations and for those who do not have access to the Internet.

The federal program office has a process to review applications for completeness. Administrative reviews generally take place after deadlines because the majority of applicants apply just before deadlines. If there are no time constraints and resources are available, the federal agency may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete

packages.