NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Table of Contents

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY....1
Executive Summary....1
Full Text of Announcement....2
I. Funding Opportunity Description....2
II. Award Information....4
III. Eligibility Information....5
IV. Application and Submission Information....6
V. Application Review Information....14
VI. Award Administration Information....17
VII. Agency Contacts....25
VIII. Other Information....25

Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

Fisheries Headquarters Program Office (FHQ)

Funding Opportunity Title

FY2025 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) - NOAA Fisheries Citizen Science Funding Opportunity

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2025-26515

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.472

Dates

Full proposals must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on Monday, November 4, 2024.

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted. See Section IV-G(2).

Webinar: A webinar will be held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, from 3:00 - 4:00 pm Eastern Time for potential applicants to learn about the funding opportunity and ask questions. Please click here to register: https://vimeo.com/event/4485149/register.

Funding Opportunity Description

Citizen science, in which individuals or organizations voluntarily participate in one or more aspects of the scientific process, is one of six NOAA science and technology focus areas. Citizen science has a rich history within NOAA with volunteer observations contributing to our Nation's prediction and management of weather, oceans, coasts, and fisheries for decades. NOAA supports opportunities for the public to engage with the agency's mission and address societal needs through science, technology, and innovation.

The purpose of this solicitation is to support citizen science projects that can help support federal fisheries stock assessments and climate-ready fisheries management. Funding will prioritize projects that: provide information that can supplement and/or inform stock assessments or increase understanding of current and/or future impacts of climate change on fish stocks and/or fishing communities.

For the purpose of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), all program priorities relating to fishery species, including those related to stock assessments, are for stocks within a federal Fishery Management Plan. These stocks can be found in the stock status tables A-G of the Fishery Stock Status Updates which are updated quarterly. For Fiscal Year 2025, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) anticipates that approximately $600,000 could be made available for the full set of selected citizen science projects that address the areas specified in the Program Priority Section (I.B.1 - I.B.3).

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NMFS is responsible for managing nearly 500 fish stocks. Under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Public Law No. 117-169, NOAA seeks to strengthen its ability to provide science-based management and conservation of our nation's living marine resources in a changing climate. This includes investing in novel approaches to data collection, like citizen science, that can help supplement and inform fisheries stock assessments and improve our understanding of climate change effects on marine resources and the communities that depend on them. Citizen science, in which the public voluntarily engages in the scientific process, can help achieve these goals in a variety of ways, including collection of high quality data and by building relationships with stakeholders (McKinley et al., 2015). Emerging technologies and a better connected public are facilitating a rapid expansion of citizen science and its capacity to contribute to research and monitoring (McKinley et al., 2015).

The principal objective of this funding announcement is to support citizen science projects that can help inform federal fishery stock assessments and climate-ready fisheries management. Funding will prioritize projects that: provide information for use in stock assessments and increase understanding of current and/or future impacts of climate change on fish stocks and/or fishing communities.

For the purpose of this NOFO, all program priorities relating to fishery species, including those related to stock assessments, are for species within a federal Fishery Management Plan.

Projects that address the program priorities described in Section B will be more competitive by providing data used to supplement and inform stock assessments or support climate-ready fisheries management and fishing community resilience.

Per theNOAA Citizen Science Strategy, projects should be designed with scientific quality and data credibility as core considerations, in order to ensure the resulting data meet the standards and requirements for their intended use. Applicants should employ approaches and partnerships that are appropriate for the communities that will be engaged in the citizen science activities, which ideally includes underserved and/or highly vulnerable communities. Applicants should also tie into relevant federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial priorities related to fisheries management as appropriate. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with fishery management entities, such as regional fishery management councils, state agencies, or interstate fisheries commissions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to have at least one partner from NMFS. The partner can be from any part of NMFS, including headquarters offices, programs, regional offices, and/or science centers. Note: federal agencies are not eligible to receive federal assistance under this announcement, but can be uncompensated project partners.

The following definitions of key terms apply to this funding opportunity.

Citizen Science: Citizen Science is defined by the Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Act (5 U.S. Code § 3724) as a form of open collaboration in which individuals or organizations participate voluntarily in the scientific process in various ways, including: (A) enabling the formulation of research questions; (B) creating and refining project design; (C) conducting scientific experiments; (D) collecting and analyzing data; (E) interpreting the results of data; (F) developing technologies and applications; (G) making discoveries; and (H) solving problems. This work can go by other names (e.g., Community Science, Volunteer Monitoring, and Public Participation in Scientific Research).

Types of Citizen Science Projects (from Bonney et al 2009):

- Contributory projects, which are generally designed by scientists and for which members of the public primarily contribute data;
- Collaborative projects, which are generally designed by scientists and for which members of the public contribute data but also may help to refine project design, analyze data, or disseminate findings;
- Co-created projects, which are designed by scientists and members of the public working together and for which at least some of the public participants are actively involved in most or all steps of the scientific process.

Fishery stock assessment: A fishery stock assessment is the scientific process of collecting and analyzing information and reporting on the condition of a fish stock and estimating its sustainable yield. For the purpose of this NOFO, stock assessments are for species within a federal Fishery Management Plan.

B. Program Priorities

NMFS seeks to fund projects in the three priority areas listed below. The priority that your project is designed to meet must be identified in the proposal. Regardless of the priority selected, projects are encouraged to do one or more of the following: a) Involve the fishing community, (recreational and/or commercial); b) Use a co-created project design; and/or c): Address or involve underserved and/or highly vulnerable communities.

1. **Improve a federal fishery stock assessment:** NMFS currently collects large amounts of data to inform its stock assessment process. This includes fishery-dependent and -independent data and can include catch, biological, abundance, ecosystem, and socio-economic data. Despite a large enterprise, many data gaps exist. There is an increasing demand for information to support and improve federal fishery stock assessments and to use innovative approaches, like citizen science, that include stakeholders to achieve this goal. As such, proposals are requested for citizen science projects that can be used to supplement traditional data sources to address one or more of the following data gaps in U.S. stock assessments for federally managed fishery species:

- Catch (e.g., discards)
- Size/age composition (e.g., age structure)

- Life history (e.g., mortality, depredation, catch disposition)
- Stock identification and definition (e.g., distribution, delineation, genetics)

These gaps have been identified in multiple assessment documents and in Blackhart and Oleynik, 2023. Consulting with Fishery Management Councils and Fisheries Science Centers can help identify potential projects. Proposals in this priority area should identify which data need(s) it will address, how it will address those needs, and demonstrate coordination and close engagement with an end user of the data in order to provide the best chance of resulting data being used in or to inform the intended stock assessment(s).

2. Increase understanding of current and future impacts of climate change on fish stocks. Climate change is impacting our Nation's fisheries. Under some scenarios, climate change may reduce fisheries catch in all U.S. regions or cause species to shift their distributions, which can impact management decisions (USGCRP, 2023). Funds will support citizen science project(s) that can be used to better understand how fish species may be impacted by changing environmental conditions. Examples could include projects that document shifts in species range and abundance.

3. Increase understanding of current and future impacts of climate change on fishing communities. Climate change is impacting our Nation's marine ecosystems and the fishing communities that depend upon these resources for their livelihoods. In some instances, this could result in change to anglers' participation and expenditures, which can impact management decisions (USGCRP, 2023). Funds will support citizen science project(s) that can be used to better understand how fishing communities may be impacted by changing environmental conditions. This would include projects that help provide information on community responses and adaptations to climate-induced changes in the marine ecosystem affecting fisheries resources. For example, projects that analyze or predict the impacts on commercial fishing, recreational (non-commercial) fishing, or subsistence fishing and the communities that support them. Proposals that address and/or involve underserved and/or highly vulnerable communities are encouraged.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. 661 – Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
15 USC 3724 – Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Act

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This funding announcement provides notice that approximately $600,000 in federal funds may be available across Federal Fiscal Years 2025-2026 (October 1 to 30 September annually) to provide support for 3-8 projects at approximately $75,000 to $200,000 per project over the two-year period. NOAA does not anticipate funding project proposals requesting greater than $200,000 in federal funding. Projects can be up to 2 years in duration, as described in Section II.B. below of this announcement.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to grant awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made, or the award is for research, per 2 C.F.R. 200.308.

B. Project/Award Period

Applicants should propose a one-year (12-month) or two-year (24-month) period of performance. Proposals should clearly identify objectives and products to be completed during that period of activity. The requested start date must begin on the first day of the month, and the end date must be the last day of a month. The earliest start date for projects will be April 1, 2025 unless discussed previously with the Agency Contact(s) listed in this announcement.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, selected citizen science projects will be funded as cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreement has been determined to be the appropriate funding instrument because of the substantial involvement by NOAA. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, collaborate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; but will not assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility reside with the awardee for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the awardee and NOAA. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA/NMFS representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, for-profit organizations, foreign public entities or foreign organizations, and state, local, territorial and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or instrumentalities are not eligible to receive federal assistance under this notice.

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas.

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) also supports broadening participation from Indigenous communities.

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

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

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

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

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

Applicants may include cost sharing, but it is not required and is not part of the evaluation criteria for this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive funding under this competition; however, federal scientists can serve as uncompensated partners on proposals. NOAA will implement appropriate mechanisms regarding any potential conflict of interest in the review process.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Electronic application packages for full applications are strongly encouraged and are available at: http://www.grants.gov. If the applicant has difficulty accessing Grants.gov or downloading the required forms, they should contact:

Kathy Mitchell
NOAA
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Email: Kathy.Mitchell@noaa.gov

B. Content and Form of Application

(Optional) Letter of Intent (LOI) Format:

Letters of intent are not required but are strongly encouraged. The LOIs are intended to allow NMFS to gauge interest and estimate the number of applications on different topics that may be submitted. The LOI should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out, should meet all format requirements. The LOI should not exceed 1 page and must be single-spaced, printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins. LOIs should be received via email by the Program Manager (Laura.Oremland@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Thursday, September 5, 2024.

Letters of Intent should provide the following information:

1. Title of project.
2. The name, affiliation, and address of the primary investigators, with e-mail and phone contact information.
3. Duration of the project (start and end dates).
4. The number and name of which one of the three priorities in Section I.B the project will address.
5. List of research objectives.
6. Summary of the proposed project, including why the work should be conducted and how it is relevant to the identified priority.
7. Estimated budget amount.

Format requirements full proposals

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

Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in effectively reviewing proposals. The full application should include the following elements: (1) Required Federal forms; (2) Project Summary (2-page limit); (3) Project Narrative (10-page limit); (4) CVs (no page limit); (5) Appendices or Attachments (20-page limit, which includes a Data Management Plan, Quality Assurance Project Plan, and Education and Outreach Plan); and (6) Budget Narrative (no page limit). Additional material beyond these sections and page limits will be disregarded.

1. Applicants must submit the following Federal forms during the initial submission of the application:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424),

- Budget Information, Non-construction Programs (SF-424A),
- Assurances, Non-construction Programs (SF-424B),
- Certification Regarding Lobbying (CD511).

Applicants may submit the information typically included on these documents through the http://www.grants.gov/ website.

2. Project summary (two page limit):

- Organization name.
- Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
- Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).
- Names of NMFS partner(s) (if applicable).
- Title, affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address for each NMFS partner (if applicable).
- Program Priority for which you are applying (see section I.B.).
- Project title.
- Project objectives for the project period.
- Summary of work to be performed within the project period.
- Budget Information - Total Federal funds requested for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (if applicable).

3. Project Narrative (10 page limit): Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the project narrative should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: specific objectives and the expected significance. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations are included in the 10 page limit. Each project must be described as follows:

- Identification of problem(s): Describe the specific problem(s) or area(s) of interest to be addressed. Specify the Program Priority in section I.B. that most closely relates to the proposal.
- Project objectives: Objectives should not exceed 3 sentences each and should clearly describe how the proposed project will address one of the three Program Priorities in section I.B.
- Project description: The project description is the scientific or technical action plan of activities that are to be accomplished during each year of the project. This description must include:

1. An explanation of how citizen science will be used to address the identified Program Priority from Section (I.B.1 - I.B.3);
2. The group, region, or community targeted for volunteer engagement in the project;
3. A list of data that will be collected and why they are needed;
4. The intended user(s) of the data are (end users);
5. A description of any coordination efforts with the intended end user(s);
6. Name(s) of partner(s) that will be involved in the project and their roles;
7. The intended duration for the project (e.g., 1 year, 2 years, ongoing). If the intent is for the project to continue after the lifetime of the award, please describe the plan for project sustainability post-award.
8. A description of the need for government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for assistance. Explain why other funding sources cannot fund all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that are, or have been, sought for the project.
9. A categorization of the project as contributory, collaborative, or co-created (See Definitions in section 1A).

- Permitting: The proposal must describe any ESA, MMPA, or other permit requirements related to the proposed research. The proposal also must describe whether the investigators have the necessary permits in hand, or what steps the investigators have taken to obtain the necessary permits. All proposals must respond to this required element whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate "no permits are required." See also Section IV.G.1. of this Announcement regarding permits. Permit information may be submitted as appendices or attachments.
- Impacts, benefits, or results expected: Identify and describe the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities.
- Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Include resumes of Principal Investigators, in the CV section. List all persons directly employed by the applicant who will be involved with the project. If a consultant and/or subcontractor is selected prior to application submission, include the name and qualifications of the consultant and/or subcontractor and the process used for selection. Describe who will monitor project performance. Also, include participation by persons or groups other than the applicant, principal investigators, or employees.
- Overview of Applicant Qualifications: Provide a brief overview of the citizen science and natural resource science and management qualifications of the project team.
- Results from prior NOAA/NMFS support (not included in the 10-page limitation; can be submitted as an appendix.): If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received support from the NOAA/NMFS in the past 5 years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided and may be placed in the Project Narrative or in an Appendix:

1. The NOAA award number, amount, and period of support;
2. The title of the project;
3. Summary of the results of the completed work.

- Evaluation of project: Recipients and subrecipients may assess or evaluate their activities and/or outcomes of those activities funded under the grant award by including in their application a brief Evaluation Plan that describes how the applicant will assess the effectiveness of their citizen science project. Any project evaluation is intended only to generate internal improvements to a program or service, or is conducted only to meet program objectives, and likely does not constitute "research." Note: Inclusion of an evaluation component is one of many factors that NMFS considers in making funding decisions and does not guarantee an award.

4. Overall Qualifications of the Applicant (the CV section no page limit;): Resumes or curriculum vitae (CVs) for up to five (5) key personnel can be included within this CV section, and should highlight relevant education, experiences, and training.

5. Appendices/Attachments (20 page limit): Appendices or attachments may be combined into a single file and include information such as Data Management Plan, Permit information, results from previous NOAA/NMFS funding, and/or letter(s) of commitment. See Section IV.G.1. regarding required permit documentation.

- Education and Outreach Plan: The applicant should include an education and outreach plan (two page limit; to be submitted as an appendix) that describes: 1) What strategy will be used for volunteer recruitment and retention taking into consideration the particular needs, skills and motivation of project participants; 2) How volunteers will be trained to ensure data collection quality and fitness for use; and 3) How the applicant will communicate project results to both volunteers and end users of the data.

- Quality Assurance Project Plan (two page limit; to be submitted as an appendix): A plan to ensure citizen science project scientific quality, data credibility, and appropriate data fitness for use must be included. This document should provide essential metadata and procedures put in place to ensure the data are valid, credible, and can be used for the intended end goal. Applicants may wish to consult this resource for examples and templates of Quality Assurance Project Plans for citizen science
- Data Management Plan (two page limit; to be submitted as an appendix).
    - Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely-used or international standards
    - Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should meet the requirements described on pages 8-9 of the Data and Publication Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts. Data Management Guidance to Applicants: The contact officials for data management guidance are listed in Section VII. of this Announcement. NOAA offers no specific technical guidance, and no specific requirement or recommendation for enabling public access to grant produced data; applicants are to describe their proposed approaches. Applicants may include the cost of data sharing in their budgets.

6. Budget Narrative (no page limit): Total project costs are the amount of funds required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description.

- Provide a detailed table with Budget Narrative (as an attachment not included in the page limits for the Project Narrative or Appendices) to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs (such as vessel charters), and indirect costs). Supplies (<$5,000/item) and equipment (>= $10,000/item) should be broken out in as much detail as possible. The budget table and narrative submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on the SF-424 and SF-424A forms. If indirect costs are proposed, include a copy of the current Federally approved rate if applicable; see also Section IV.F.1. below. Additional cost detail may be required prior to a final analysis of overall cost allowability, allocability, and reasonableness.
- Please note the following restrictions for salaries and fringe benefits: Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. Hourly rates and projected hours worked on the project and/or percentage of time and yearly salary should be included for all salary requests. Applicants are strongly encouraged to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure the proposal is competitive.

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

Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse impacts on the environment. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further analysis, covered under an existing programmatic analysis, or whether additional analysis is necessary in conformance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

See Section VI.B. of this Announcement for more information about NEPA. For those applications needing further analysis, affected applicants will be informed after the merit review stage and asked to assist by providing any information necessary to complete a draft Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

Failure to obtain other Federal, State, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide information necessary to complete environmental analysis where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessments or documentation) may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Unless excepted under 2 C.F.R. 25.110, each applicant is required to: (1) be registered in the Federal System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

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

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements and must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 4, 2024. Failure to follow these requirements will result in proposals being returned without review. Optional Letters of Intent should be submitted by Thursday, September 5, 2024.

Important: All applicants, both electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. Electronic applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy, and if Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit applications in paper format. Paper applicants should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

Applications must follow the format described in this document and must be complete. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NMFS as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on 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.

F. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Cost Rates

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., utilities, rent, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. Applicants may use indirect costs or a portion of these costs as part of the non-federal cost share.

Documentation of the most recent, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal government must be included in the application. Applicants that do not have a current negotiated rate but plan to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, must submit documentation necessary to establish a rate within 90 days of receiving an award.

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to: charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) (in accordance with updates to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) that will go into effect in October 2024); describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative; or establish a new rate through their cognizant agency for indirect costs as defined under 2 C.F.R. § 200.1. Please also refer to Section VI.B. for additional information.

2. Allowable Costs

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 determined by reference to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable."

G. Other Submission Requirements

1. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, State, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of permits must be included in the proposal package as attachments or appendices.

Most projects involving directed or incidental impacts (i.e., introducing sound into an animal's environment or employing gear that may entangle or injure) affecting marine mammals and species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA may require permits or authorizations under section 101 or 104 of the MMPA and/or section 10 of the ESA (50 CFR 222.307 and 222.308). If an ESA permit covering the proposed activities has already been issued, the permit number must be provided in the application. Issuance of the necessary ESA and/or MMPA permit(s) or authorization(s) or evidence that the applicant has submitted a permit application is required in order for a proposal to be considered for funding. If the grant applicant is not the Principal Investigator (PI) or the permit holder, a copy of the authorization to work under the permit and/or a letter of support from the permit holder is required.

Timelines for processing ESA and MMPA permit applications can take upwards of 1 year. Please consider this timing when putting together your application for funding. For further information on ESA and MMPA permit requirements and application procedures, contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources Permits Division (301-427-8401) or see https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permits-and-forms#protected-resources.

Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse impacts on the environment. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further analysis, covered under an existing programmatic analysis, or whether additional analysis is necessary in conformance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). See Section VI.B. of this Announcement for more information about NEPA. For those applications needing further analysis, affected applicants will be informed after the merit review stage and asked to assist by providing any information necessary to complete a draft Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

Failure to obtain other Federal, State, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide information necessary to complete environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessments or documentation) may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

2. Application Submission

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations must be in place by the time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

The first PD/PI listed on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the"Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form.Failure to register in the Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

Registration requirements

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

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

1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

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

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

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

2. eRA Commons

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

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

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

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

- The Signing Official (SO) user account must be assigned to an individual with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. The SO will receive 4-5 emails throughout the registration process.
- The Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account must be assigned to an individual with primary responsibility for the project(s) described in the grant application. The eRA Commons User ID (Username) for the PD/PI must also be listed on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).

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

3. Grants.Gov

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

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

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

Submission Validation

The Grants.gov and eRA Commons validation processes for a submitted application can take up to two business days after submission. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. To ensure the successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

Grants.gov and eRA Commons will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Submissions may also be rejected if:

- The Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI)'s account username within eRA Commons is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).
- The Universal Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 8.c (UEI).
- The Congressional District is not entered in the correct format on the SF-424 form for item 16 (Congressional Districts). The correct format is: [State Abbreviation]-[three digit district number]. For example, Virginia's 1st Congressional District would be listed as VA-001.
- PDF files are not flattened. To flatten a fillable PDF, you can use the "Print to PDF" function from any web browser or PDF reader application.
- File sizes exceed 100 MB.
- Page sizes are greater than 8.5x11.

- File names exceed 50 characters (including spaces).
- File names include special characters.

After you submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by FOUR automated responses (1-Grants.gov Submission Receipt; 2-Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application; 3-Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application; 4-Grants.gov Agency Tracking Number Assignment for Application).
In addition to the Grants.gov automated notification messages, you may receive automated email notifications of any errors or warnings identified by eRA Commons. You must resolve all eRA Commons errors prior to the application due date in order for the application to be processed.
Once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an additional automated notification that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned.

You should save and print the proof of submission messages from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons. If you do not receive an acceptance message from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons, you should follow up with the agency contact listed in VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission.
For additional information on application requirements or submission procedures, contact:
Kathy Mitchell
NOAA
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Email: Kathy.Mitchell@noaa.gov
A webinar will be held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, from 3:00 - 4:00 pm Eastern Time for potential applicants to learn about the funding opportunity and ask questions. Click here to register: https://vimeo.com/event/4485149/register.

Please refer to important information in the submission dates and times above (Section IV.C) to help ensure your application is received on time.
If, for any reason, applicants are unable to submit their full 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. Signed hard copies of applications may be submitted to the contact information above.
Applications submitted by mail must include all relevant application elements described in this funding announcement must include an SF-424 form with original ink or valid electronic 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 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline day; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Regardless of the method of transmission of a paper application (i.e., mailed in or delivery services), applications received more than five business days after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Applicants who submit applications by paper are responsible for tracking their application and should notify the NOAA Contact Official in Section VI. of this announcement by email that the application is forthcoming.

V. Application Review Information

Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals	Maximum Points: 35

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

Does this project address an identified need? (10 points)

- To what extent does the application demonstrate an end-user's commitment to using the resulting project data? (10 points)
- How well does the project address its selected program priority area from section I.B.? (10 points)
- Does the proposal provide evidence that the project can accomplish stated goals in a 2-year time period? (5 points)

2. Technical merit	Maximum Points: 30

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.

- Does the applicant demonstrate that their objectives are realistic and can be accomplished within the proposed project period? (10 points)
- Does the project apply citizen science best practices with respect to project design? (10 points)
- Is the proposed project designed with scientific quality and data credibility as core considerations? (10 points)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 10

his criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

- Does the applicant or a member of the applicant's project team have experience in the field of citizen science? (5 points)
- Does the applicant or a member of the applicant's project team demonstrate a knowledge and comprehension of the selected program priority area? (5 points)

4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 10

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

This budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

- Is the budget request reasonable, and does the applicant justify the proposed budget request?
- Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and/or are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project?

5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 15

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

- Does the project plan apply appropriate engagement and outreach techniques to recruit and retain project participants? (5 points)
- Does the project plan describe safe and appropriate volunteer training methods? (5 points)
- Does the project plan describe how project leads will communicate with volunteers and end users of the data about the project (including project results) throughout the project? (5 points)

Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation of Applications:

Once a full application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

2. Technical Review:

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will undergo a technical merit review. Technical review is conducted by a minimum of three independent reviewers. Each reviewer will individually evaluate and score proposals (1-100 points) using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A. This review may involve subject matter experts from both NOAA and non-NOAA organizations.

Following completion of the technical review, the individual technical review scores will be averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order by their final technical scores. A “cutoff" score will be established by Citizen Science NOFO staff. Applications that scored below the cutoff will be eliminated from further consideration.

3. Option for a Review Panel

For those applications at or above the cutoff technical evaluation score, NMFS may convene a review panel, which may include federal and non-federal members, to review the scored proposals and to enhance NOAA’s understanding of the proposals. Each Citizen Science NOFO panelist will evaluate, in a group setting, the applications by the evaluation criteria described in section V.A.

During the panel discussion, each member of the panel will independently assign a numerical rating between 1.0 and 10.0 (acceptable to excellent) for each application according to the following scale, and provide comments to support their score.

1—Acceptable; application was adequately responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A), and partially addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

5—Good; application was frequently responsive to the evaluation criteria and satisfactorily addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

10—Exceptional; application was highly responsive to the evaluation criteria and exceptionally addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

Technical reviewers and panel members will be required to certify they do not have a conflict of interest and that they will maintain confidentiality of the proposals, and for panel deliberations, if applicable. NOAA will protect panelist identity to the maximum extent permitted by law.

No consensus advice will be given by the Citizen Science NOFO Panelists on recommendations or scores. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order will be developed based on the average score from the review panel.

Selection Factors

The Federal Program Officer will, in consultation with Citizen Science Program staff as appropriate, review the ranking of the proposals and make recommendations to the Selecting Official. The numerical ranking from the panel review (or the technical review if a panel is not convened) will be the primary consideration by the Selecting Official in deciding which of the proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the panel reviews, panel review comments, and recommendations of the Federal Program Officer. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order, unless it is justified that a proposal be selected out of rank order based upon any of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds by

a. Geographic area
b. Type of institutions

c. Type of partners
d. Research areas
e. Project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies
4. Program priorities set out in Section I.B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Adequacy of information (including information on permit requirements or status) 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.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, without re-competition, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be required, in consultation with NMFS, to further refine or modify study methodology and/or budget as a condition of project approval.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.208. See also Review of Risk in Section VI.B. of 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. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. 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.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the 120 days following the date given in this announcement that the proposals are due to NOAA. Funding should begin during Spring 2025 for most approved projects. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to April 1, 2025, unless otherwise directed by the Federal Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from the Federal Program Officer that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued by e-mail from NOAA's electronic grants system to the Authorized Representative of the project.

The official notice of award in which NOAA obligates funds for a project is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award. Only the NOAA Grants Officer will issue the CD-450 through NOAA's electronic grants system. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award, as such costs are at the risk of the applicant not receiving an award or such costs not being approved. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification from the Program Office indicating that their proposals were not recommended for funding and including technical reviewers' comments.

Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of at least 12 months, and then destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS. For awards designated on the CD-450 as Research, the Commerce Terms, and the Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions (Research Terms) as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently, at https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a specific award condition.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

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

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

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH. For research projects involving Human Subjects an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or an exemption determination will be required in accordance with DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Section G.05.i "Research Involving Human Subjects" found at https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy.

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

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.

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

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information: https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEWS AND EVALUATION. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with §200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ("IIJA"), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States–this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials1 are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

WAIVERS. When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOC may grant, a waiver from these requirements. DOC will notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. 1) When DOC has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which DOC determines that: a. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; b. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or c. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. DOC will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america.

DEFINITIONS. “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives2 —that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference’’ means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. ‘‘Project’’ means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. -- 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

INDIRECT COST RATE. If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 15% of MTDC (as allowable under the revised version of 2 C.F.R. §200.414 that will be in effect starting October 2024). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov.

C. Reporting

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

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at https://www.fsrs.gov/ on all subawards over $30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

1. All financial reports should be submitted through the NOAA electronic grants management system. Reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award.
2. Performance Progress Reports must also be submitted to the Federal Program Officer through the NOAA electronic grants management system on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. Pertinent, captioned photographs of project activities are requested and may be included within the progress report document. Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks scheduled for the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period. The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work. The performance reports must also include documentation of all fish caught by vessels participating in the project, including catch that may or may not be directly applicable to the research subject matter. The final, comprehensive report should include an "Executive Summary" of the project accomplishments which briefly and succinctly summarizes the final report for website or publication use. Limit this summary to no more than one page.
3. Publications, Videos, and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship: Publication of the results or findings of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of recording and reporting scientific information. These are also constructive means to expand access to federally funded research. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency, and when releasing information related to a funded project, include a statement that the project or effort undertaken was or is sponsored by NMFS. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgement and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NMFS. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS."

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $25,000. Refer to OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. Part 170 (2015), accessible at http://go.usa.gov/cCr8j.

VII. Agency Contacts

For further information about NOAA Citizen Science, please contact:

Laura Oremland
Education Program Manager
NMFS Office of Science and Technology
Phone: 301-427-8162
Email: Laura.Oremland@noaa.gov

For assistance with your application, please contact:

Kathy Mitchell
Grants Management Specialist
Office of Management and Budget
Phone: (301) 427-8721
Email: Kathy.Mitchell@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

References:

- Bonney, R., Ballard, H., Jordan, R., McCallie, E., Phillips, T., Shirk, J., and Wilderman, C. 2009. Public Participation in Scientific Research: Defining the Field and Assessing Its Potential for Informal Science Education. A CAISE Inquiry Group Report. Washington, D.C.: Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE). https://www.informalscience.org/sites/default/files/P
- Link, J.S., Griffis, R., and S. Busch (Editors). 2015. NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-F/SPO-155, 70p.
- Lynch, P. D., R. D. Methot, and J. S. Link (eds.). 2018. Implementing a Next Generation Stock Assessment Enterprise. An Update to the NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Improvement Plan. U.S. Dep. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-F/SPO-183, 127 p. doi: 10.7755/TMSPO.183: Available online at https://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/content/tech-memo/SAIP2018
- McKinley et al. (2015). Investing in Citizen Science Can Improve Natural Resource Management and Environmental Protection. Issues in Ecology. 2015. 10.1016/j.biocon.2016.05.015.
- McKinley et al. (2017). Citizen science can improve conservation science, natural resource management, and environmental protection Biol. Conserv., 208 (2017), pp. 15-28, 10.1016/j.biocon.2016.05.015
- NMFS, 2023. National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. Advance the goals and objectives of the updated National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy or otherwise address a recreational fishery management issue.
- NOAA, 2021.NOAA Citizen Science Strategy
- USGCRP, 2023: *Fifth National Climate Assessment*. Crimmins, A.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, B.C. Stewart, and T.K. Maycock, Eds. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA. https://doi.org/10.7930/NCA5.2023