FY 2024 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program - Ruth D. Gates Grant Program: Local and National Capacity Building Support Grants and Cooperative Agreements

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2024 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program - Ruth D. Gates Grant Program: Local and National Capacity Building Support Grants and Cooperative Agreements

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2024-2008253

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.482, Coral Reef Conservation Program

Dates: Full applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on February 15, 2024 to be considered for funding.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to solicit financial assistance applications that will build capacity in States with coral reef ecosystems (defined as the states of Florida and Hawaii; territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands; or any other territory or possession of the United States or separate sovereign in free association with the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem) by strengthening local nongovernmental organizations' and/or other interested stakeholder groups' ability to participate in future coral reef stewardship partnerships, as outlined in the reauthorized Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 6401-15 (the Act). Projects funded through this competition must address one of two priorities:

PRIORITY 1: Local Coral Community Group Support
Applications submitted under the Local Coral Community Group Support priority should propose work plans over a duration of 12 to 24 months (1 to 2 years). Each application should not request more than $50,000 in total Federal funds per geographic region (e.g., counties, islands, or States) in which the project will be performed. Applications that propose projects across multiple geographic regions may request proportionally higher levels of Federal funds. Applications may be submitted by the local organization(s) themselves or by a collaborating partner (either local, regional, or national) who may act as a fiscal agent or primary program coordinator.

PRIORITY 2: National Coral Conservation Support.
Applications submitted under the National Coral Conservation Support priority will be

implemented through either a grant or cooperative agreement and should propose work plans over a duration of 12 to 48 months (1 to 4 years). Each application should request no more than $75,000 in Federal funds per year for projects with regional beneficiaries and no more than $150,000 per year in Federal funds for projects with national beneficiaries. It is expected that one national or up to two regional applications may be selected. Applications are expected to be submitted by multi-state or multinational entities that may be located outside one of the beneficiary States, however, applicants should demonstrate experience working across these diverse jurisdictions.

Pending Federal appropriations, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) expects approximately $1,000,000 to be available for initiating financial assistance awards with up to ten (10) organizations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. As mandated in the Act, recipients are required to match NOAA's Federal contributions with non-Federal matching contributions at a minimum ratio of 1:1, unless the applicant requests and is granted a waiver to the matching requirement by the agency.

All projects must receive evidence of support (e.g., a letter of support or other indication of collaboration) by appropriate representatives of States or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted. NOAA CRCP encourages applicants to provide evidence of support with their applications, and requires evidence of support to be confirmed prior to final selection. All proposals will be shared with coral reef management representatives from the appropriate jurisdiction(s) during review and their feedback will be considered prior to final selection. Any projects that do not obtain support are unable to be funded.

The NOAA CRCP encourages applicants and awardees to support the principles of diversity and inclusion when writing their proposals and performing their work. Diversity is defined as a collection of individual attributes that together help organizations achieve objectives. Inclusion is defined as a culture that connects each employee to the organization. Promoting diversity and inclusion improves creativity, productivity, and the vitality of the climate research and grant community in which CRCP engages.

If selected, applicants must also register with eRA Commons using the unique entity identifier (UEI) obtained from SAM.gov. The applicant's organization must be registered by someone with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. Only authorized organization officials are qualified to be a signing official (SO) for their organization. If your organization is already registered with eRA Commons because you've applied for a federal grant that currently uses eRA systems, you do not need to register again.

Registering with eRA Commons can take up to four weeks to process. It is encouraged that

applicants register with eRA Commons as soon as possible to avoid any delays. Please see the eRA Commons Registration Webinar Recording for more information and a registration demonstration. eRA Common may be accessed online at https://public.era.nih.gov/commonsplus.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

This funding opportunity specifically seeks to extend resources to support local interested stakeholder groups to build their capacity to participate in coral reef stewardship partnerships, as they are established. A coral reef stewardship partnership is a group established to further community-based stewardship of federal and non-federal coral reef units (refer to 16 USC 6405 for more details). This will be accomplished through direct funding to local coral reef conservation and community groups, and support to regional or national projects that will provide tools, training and skills development to the coral conservation community free of charge.

To further community-based stewardship of coral reefs, the Act permits the establishment of coral reef stewardship partnerships. These partnerships are intended to include various Federal agency representatives, State (defined as the states of Florida and Hawaii; territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands; or any other territory or possession of the United States or separate sovereign in free association with the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem) or county resource management agency representatives, coral reef research centers, nongovernmental organizations, Native entities culturally affiliated with the subject reef, and other members deemed appropriate, such as interested stakeholder groups.

In addition, the respective chairpersons may include “interested stakeholder groups” which is defined as any of the following with an interest in an applicable coral reef or ecologically significant unit of coral reef:
- A business
- A commercial or recreational fisherman
- A recreationalist
- A Federal, State, Tribal, or local government unit with related jurisdiction
- An institution of higher education (as such term is defined in section 1001(a) of title 20).
- A nongovernmental organization

Established coral reef stewardship partnerships will be eligible to assist in development of the national coral reef resilience strategy, develop and implement coral reef action plans, and encourage coordination across partners. Stewardship partnership members may have increased eligibility to apply to various Federal funding opportunities outlined in the Act, including the Coral Reef Stewardship Fund, Emergency Assistance, and Ruth D. Gates Coral

Reef Conservation Grant Program.

All projects must receive evidence of support (e.g., a letter of support or other indication of collaboration) by appropriate representatives of States or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted. This evidence of support should be provided with the application, when possible, but is not required within the package. All proposals will be shared with coral reef management representatives from the appropriate jurisdiction(s) and their feedback will be considered prior to final selection. Any projects that do not obtain support are unable to be funded. Applicants are encouraged to consult with all relevant local governmental and non-governmental entities involved in coral reef activities while developing the application and demonstrate collaboration among these entities.

Applicants selected for funding under this competition, or the receipt of support of a project by a State does not guarantee acceptance into stewardship partnerships or that formation of a stewardship partnership is imminent for the reef unit(s) in which the project is proposed. Applicants not selected for funding are still encouraged to apply for stewardship partnership membership as they are developed and future funding opportunities.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the CRCP intends to initiate new awards through competitive Notice of Funding Opportunities within the Ruth D. Gates Grant Program:

1. Local and National Capacity Building Support Grants and Cooperative Agreements; and
2. Coral Restoration Innovation Grants.

All of the information in this funding opportunity announcement pertains only to the Local and National Capacity Building Support category. More information about the Coral Restoration Innovation Grants program and other funding opportunities can be found at https://coralreef.noaa.gov/conservation/funding_opps.html as it becomes available.

B. Program Priorities

The FY 2024 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program - Ruth D. Gates Local and National Capacity Building Program is a two-track competition. Applicants should clearly identify in their application the track that should be used to evaluate their proposal. If a category is not identified by the applicant within the proposal, NOAA will identify a category for the applicant. No appeals regarding placement will be considered.

PRIORITY 1: Local Coral Community Group Support: This priority is intended to directly support the development of local interested stakeholder groups which could be eligible members of a coral reef stewardship partnership. Regional or national organizations may

also apply in partnership with, or on behalf of, local organizations, as needed (e.g., as a fiscal agent, primary service provider, or coordinating entity). Applications must describe how the project will build capacity and prepare local organizations for participation in stewardship partnerships to ensure long-term progress.

Capacity building activities that may be included in applications include, but are not limited to:
- Organizing local stakeholder groups into a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization;
- Development of sustainable financing options or funding portfolios for local organizations;
- Obtaining or providing training focused on application to, and management of, Federal and non-- Federal financial assistance and/or contract awards, including: proposal development guidance, proper documentation and administration of awards, accounting procedures, sub-award mechanisms, etc.;
- Development of citizen science or community volunteer groups, with an emphasis on local villages or community-based subsistence fishing groups;
- Support for community-based conservation areas (e.g., village Marine Protected Areas, Marine Life Conservation Districts, special management areas, Hawaiian fishponds, etc.);
- Stewardship partnership development and coordination activities, with specific support of the relevant State coral management agency,

Activities under this priority must take place within an eligible State, defined as the states of Florida and Hawaii; territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands; or any other territory or possession of the United States or separate sovereign in free association with the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem.

PRIORITY 2: National Coral Conservation Support: This priority supports regional or national organizations to increase coral conservation and resilience knowledge and build capacity across multiple States.

These activities may include, but are not limited to:
- Online and/or in-person training and skill development opportunities to benefit local coral reef management agency staff, local interested stakeholder groups, other nongovernmental organizations, and/or the general public;
- Development of tools that educate and address the needs of the general coral reef community that will be made publicly available at no charge.

Activities under this priority must be for the direct benefit of the public and State and local governments of the United States and/or any other territory or possession of the United

States or separate sovereign in free association with the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem. However, online tools and training developed are encouraged to be made available to the international community provided any additional costs are not included in the application as either Federal or non-Federal expenses.

Applicants should also note that the following activities will not be considered for federal funding under this announcement:
- Dive or beach clean-ups
- Coral outplanting activities
- Coral research activities
- Water quality research or implementation of watershed action plans

Expenses that will not be considered for funding under this announcement include:
- Vehicle or large equipment purchases
- Most improvements to land, buildings, or equipment which materially increase their value or useful life (contact NOAA for questions before submission)

C. Program Authority

Authority for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program - Ruth D. Gates Local and National Capacity Building Program is provided by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, 16 U.S.C. § 6410, as amended by James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Pub. L. 117–263, December 23, 2022, 136 Stat 2395, reauthorized Coral Reef Conservation Act).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for this federal award announcement is approximately $1,000,000 and is subject to the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations. The anticipated federal funding amount per Local Coral Community Support award is no more than $50,000 total. The anticipated federal funding amount per National Coral Conservation Support award is no more than $75,000 in Federal funds per year for projects with regional beneficiaries and no more than $150,000 per year in Federal funds for projects with national beneficiaries. This announcement anticipates funding approximately ten (10) awards depending on available funding.

Funding for the second, third, and/or fourth year (FY25, FY26 and/or FY27) should be

estimated in the FY24 application, with final amounts determined in future years, pending future federal appropriations and progress towards project milestones. Proposals for multi-year funding should outline the costs expected for year two, three, and four, as applicable, in detail in this proposal (see Section IV.B for more details about the budget narrative for multi-year awards).

The lead applicant on any proposal will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of, and in a manner consistent with, this program, including any funds awarded to an eligible sub-awardee.

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, the applicant does so at their own risk of not being selected and these costs not being included in a subsequent award. Direct costs of proposal preparation shall not be included within the project application budget. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for project costs if this program fails to receive funding. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

B. Project/Award Period

The start date of proposals shall be on October 1, 2024 or later. Applications for 1) Local Coral Community Support awards should conform to performance periods of 12 to 24 months (1 to 2 years). 2) National Coral Conservation Support awards should conform to performance periods of 12 to 48 months (1 to 4 years).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for these awards may be a grant or cooperative agreement. In the case of a cooperative agreement, NOAA will have substantial involvement in the project. Applicants may propose anticipated federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals, or NOAA may establish the particular involvement. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include the collaboration and participation of NOAA Federal Program Officers, Coral Reef Management Liaisons, Coral Reef Fisheries Liaisons, and other CRCP staff in project development, planning and implementation; technical monitoring of award activities beyond ordinary stewardship; and coordination of funded projects with other CRCP-funded efforts as needed. When applicable, substantial involvement will be described in a condition included in a funded award. NOAA will address any negotiations on NOAA staff roles in any project through the substantial involvement award condition.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The purpose of this competition is to aid in coral reef stewardship partnership development. At the time of this announcement, these stewardship partnerships have not been established so eligibility for the Ruth D. Gates Grant Program (16 U.S.C. § 6410(c)(2)(C)) has been expanded to include most applicant types who could be considered eligible members of an "interested stakeholder group" (16 U.S.C. § 6415 (15)) that might be accepted into a stewardship partnership. Until such time, these entities may be considered as "candidate coral reef stewardship partnership members," engaging in pre-partnership development activities. For Priority 1, regional or national organizations may also apply in partnership with, or on behalf of, local organizations, as needed (e.g., as a fiscal agent, primary service provider, or coordinating entity).

Eligible applicant types for include:
-City or township governments
-County governments
-Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
-Native American tribal organizations (other than -Federally recognized tribal governments)
-Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
-Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
-Private institutions of higher education
-Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
-Small businesses
-Special district governments
-State governments
-Foreign public entity (see 2 CFR 200.1)
-Foreign organization (see 2 CFR 200.1)

NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications. NOAA CRCP staff are available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities. For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement, but may serve as collaborative project partners. In-kind services from federal agencies and employees 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 may include, but are not limited to, partnership services, serving in a review capacity, or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

DOC/NOAA supports cultural and gender diversity and encourages women and minority individuals and groups to participate in proposals submitted to this program. In addition, 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 historically underserved areas. DOC/NOAA encourages applications involving any of the above institutions to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies. Federal funds for any coral conservation award funded under 16 U.S.C. 6403(b) may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this Grant Program requires a 1:1 contribution of non-federal matching funds.

"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)." NOAA will accept 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 must 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.

If the applicant plans to use any federal funds as a match, the applicant should identify the federal statute authorizing the program to use federal funds to meet the match or cost sharing requirements. 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" policy in Section IV.B.7 of this announcement.

In addition, any Program Income that may arise in the project may be applied 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. 6410(b)(3):

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

In the case of a waiver request, the applicant must 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, must be submitted as part of the final application. Please address the waiver request as described in Section IV.B (component 6) of this announcement.

In addition, under 48 U.S.C. 1469a, the DOC has determined that any requirement for local matching funds under $200,000 (including third party in-kind contributions) to be provided by the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands shall be waived, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Any matching funds otherwise required by law to be provided by government entities of an insular area may be waived at the discretion of the operating unit. Please contact the individual listed in Section VII. Agency Contacts for more information about eligibility for this exemption.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

"Foreign public entity" (i.e. government) and "foreign organization" are listed as eligible applicant types, however, project activities are limited to those taking place or direct benefiting States with coral reef ecosystems (defined as the states of Florida and Hawaii; territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands; or any other territory or possession of the United States or separate sovereign in free association with the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem), as described in the Funding Description, Program Objectives (Section I.A.), Program Priorities (Section I.B.), and Evaluation Criteria (Section V.A.). Any international proposals that include federal or non-Federal funding for projects outside of these areas will not be considered.

For the purpose of eligibility under this announcement, regional organizations may be considered entities that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale, such as existing regional ocean partnerships, councils of government, provided that they may receive and expend federal funds. If an organization is not eligible to receive and expend federal funds as a legal entity, the organization may partner with an eligible legal entity to apply for funding.

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 the electronic application is not accessible, contact Craig Reid <Craig.A.Reid@noaa.gov> and Victoria Barker <Victoria.Barker@noaa.gov>.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should submit a complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applications that do not follow the proposal application requirements stated in this announcement may not be considered for review.

All application materials should use a legible 11- or 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. Electronic applications must be submitted as Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) to the extent possible.

The complete application package should include the following documents and forms:

1. A project description (proposal), as described in the application component section below, should be limited to no more than 10 pages single spaced. The project description should also include a title page and table of contents, but these pages (title and table of contents) will not count towards the page limit.

Project descriptions that exceed the 10-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative (see element 2 of the required components section below) before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Pages removed 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.

2. The following Federal forms from the SF-424 Form Family should be included in the application package, as applicable (no page limit with forms and related mandatory federal form information). Please note that these federal forms must be filled out in a Grants.gov Workspace:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424.
Applicants requesting Federal funding under this program must submit a copy of SF-424, 'Application for Federal Assistance'. If the applicant submits a hard copy of the final application, the SF-424 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.
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A.
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 multi-year projects. 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. Multi-year awards will have out year funds shown in Section E. 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. Each proposed sub-award of $25,000 or more should be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed subaward budget.
- Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

NEPA information, and the Appendices can be uploaded within the application package under “Other Narrative” or “Other Forms”.

All proposals should contain the following components:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet)

- Project title
- Proposed project period (start date must be the first of the month and end date must be the last day of the month)
- Type of project (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement)
- Recipient name (must match registered name in Sam.gov)
- Recipient Unique Entity Identifier number (must match applicant information in SAM.Gov)
- Principal and other investigators (names, organization, and contact information)
- Financial representative (names, organization, and contact information)
- Requested funding by year (as appropriate) (if the project intends to have NOAA retain funds for technical assistance on the project, note the amounts by year and line office using

the funds)
- Brief project summary

2. Project Description/Project Narrative. All project descriptions (proposals) must include the following sections:

- Goal, Objective(s), and Approach. 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. 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 of partners and collaborators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. Describe how the partners or collaborators are involved in the planning and design process, if at all.

Applications should provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of the 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.

- Background. Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem, gap or need, and network to be addressed and the status of ongoing efforts and coordination to address the identified needs or gaps. Summarize the relationship of the proposed work to other regional efforts. Include a description of the qualifications of the individual or entity applying for funds, including demonstrated expertise in the conservation or restoration of coral reefs in practice or through significant contributions to the body of existing scientific research on coral reefs.

- Partnerships and networks. Identify and describe the professional or technical network that will be leveraged or created locally and/or regionally. Describe how the partners and network users will interact with the project, the communication mechanism utilized to engage the network, and describe how they will use the outcome or results of the project. Describe what existing federal, state, and local organizations or programs will be connected, integrated, and leveraged. Describe the roles of partners and indicate any efforts or resources

that will be leveraged in the project. Letters of collaboration from partners and any letters of support shall be included in the appendices as appropriate. Note that evidence of support for the project is required from appropriate representatives of States or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted prior to final selection.

- Task Outcomes. Identify and describe the anticipated project outcomes. Explain how they will benefit the conservation and restoration 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 should include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation and restoration, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future.

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

3. Budget Narrative and Justification

In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and justification of costs broken out by individual tasks. 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. For additional details, please review the budget guidance provided at: https://coast.noaa.gov/data/coasthome/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-for-NOAA-grants.pdf.

Applicants should include costs in their proposal to cover expenses to track and measure outcomes, and key metrics of their program.

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known contracts and subawards, and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in the narrative. Applicants

should describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each subaward should include form SF-424A.

Detailed budget information includes:

- Name of identified qualified sub recipient or contractor, 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 under the contract or subaward.).
- 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.
- 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 the program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.331-200.333 for subawards, and 200.317-200.327 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price 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 200.1 Equipment and 2 CFR 200.313.

Non-federal applicants should identify if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

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 - .327. 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.d., https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf, 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 a bi-annual NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) workshop for recipients.

Refer to item 7 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative.

4. Appendices

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 narrative, letters of collaboration, letters of support, lists of data sources, and maps) and should not exceed a maximum of 15 pages. Applicants should number the pages in their proposal and any appendices.

As a standard practice, NOAA requires that resumes for Principal Investigators (PIs) of competitive awards be on file and maintained in the grants processing system used by the Department of Commerce, NOAA’s electronic grants management system. Recipients of any award (competitive or non-competitive) are required to designate PIs in NOAA’s electronic grants management system within 30 days of receiving award offers.

The following appendix documents should be included in the application package:

- Evidence of Support. All evidence of support from partner organizations that are instrumental to the project should be included in the application package. Documents/emails

must clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Evidence of support from appropriate representatives of States or other government jurisdictions are required.

For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.

NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications. NOAA Office for Coastal Management staff are available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives.

- Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of two pages for each key investigator.

- Data Management Plan. This announcement is seeking proposals that may generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan may be required as part of the proposal.

The Data Management Plan should address the requirements in this section of the Announcement.
- Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the 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 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 contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. There is an optional fillable form for data management and sharing plans at this link: https://coast.noaa.gov/data/coasthome/funding/_pdf/forms/data-mgmt-sharing-plan-review-form.pdf. Otherwise, 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. 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. The NOAA Program is not offering specific data management technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged. For more information about data sharing in this program, contact the agency official listed in Section VII. of this funding announcement.
- NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.
- Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.
- NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html
- Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.
- More information about the NOAA Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA’s Environmental Data Management Committee website at:
https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.all.php
- Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Craig Reid, Federal Program Officer, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, Craig.A.Reid@noaa.gov.

Additional Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers

Data Accessibility: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with

NCEI regarding these pending data.

Technical Recommendations: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Resources: NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB).

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.

5. 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. Applicants 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 and 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.

6. Match waiver request (if applicable)

Applicants are required to provide a 1:1 or greater ratio of matching funds to federal funds in accordance with the provisions of the Coral Reef Conservation Act. If the proposal lacks sufficient matching funds, the applicant may include a separate document in which the applicant requests a waiver to the matching funds requirement as described in Section 6410(b)(3) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as amended. Although the CRCP will consider these requests, in most cases, waivers of the full matching funds requirement will not be provided for applicants to this competition and applicants are advised to provide as much as possible for consideration. Please address all waiver requests to Jennifer Koss, CRCP Director, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, the total amount of matching funds requested to be waived, attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other circumstances preventing the availability of match. For more details see Section III.B.

7. 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 200.1 and 200.412-415.

A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal Government should be included with the application package. If an award recipient does not have an established indirect cost rate with any federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimis rate (10% of modified total direct costs) described at 2 CFR 200.414. Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the 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.

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

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. More information on establishing or negotiating indirect cost rates can be found in Section IV.B.8 of this solicitation.

Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for subawardees; 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.

In addition to the standard elements described above, applicants may upload additional supporting documentation by using the 'Optional Form' box under 'Other Attachments' in Grants.gov during the application submission process.

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

Applicants should: (1) Be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM.gov) before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on an 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.

Applicants should allow a minimum of two weeks and up to six weeks to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed. On April 4, 2022, the federal government began using a new Unique Entity Identifier number provided by SAM. Your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed to receive a UEI, which is provided by SAM. If your entity is already registered in SAM.gov,

your new UEI has already been assigned and is viewable in SAM.gov. This includes inactive registrations.

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 must be received by and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern time on February 15, 2024.

Applicants should consider the possibility of winter storms and other unforeseen impacts from natural hazards that could affect their Internet access and use of Grants.gov on or before application due dates. Applicants should be aware that localized hazardous weather or other situations beyond their control affecting 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 (EO) 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 https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SPOC-list-as-of-2023.pdf.

F. Funding Restrictions

Ineligible projects

The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (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; (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation; and (4) Coral research activities, coral outplanting activities, water quality research, implementation of watershed action plans, and dive or beach clean-ups.

Cost Principles

Recipients are subject to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles,” as well as any DOC

regulations that may be in effect at the time of award. Generally, allowable costs 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) by searching the Funding Opportunity Number or the Federal Assistance Listings number (11.482). Application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the "Apply" function on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Unique Identity Identifier and be registered in the SAM.gov, which requires periodic renewals. Refer to Section IV.C. for details on receiving a unique identity identifier number and registering with SAM.gov.

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

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.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by three (3) automated responses (the first confirms receipt by Grants.gov, not NOAA; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing).

The federal program office has a process to review 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 available resources, the federal agency may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete packages.

If selected, applicants must also register with eRA Commons using the unique entity identifier (UEI) obtained from SAM.gov. The applicant's organization must be registered by someone with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. Only
authorized organization officials are qualified to be a signing official (SO) for their organization. If your organization is already registered with eRA Commons because you've applied for a federal grant that currently uses eRA systems, you do not need to register again.

Registering with eRA Commons can take up to four weeks to process. It is encouraged that applicants register with eRA Commons as soon as possible to avoid any delays. Please see the eRA Commons Registration Webinar Recording for more information and a registration demonstration. eRA Common may be accessed online at
https://public.era.nih.gov/commonsplus.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Application Evaluation Criteria:
Applications will be evaluated based on how well the proposal aligns with NOAA CRCP's management priorities, their technical merit, overall qualifications of the funding applicant, project costs, and outreach and education.

Evaluation Guidance Provided to Merit Reviewers:
The reauthorized Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 6401-15, permits the establishment of coral reef stewardship partnerships and coral reef action plans.

Coral reef stewardship partnerships (mandatory for Federally managed coral reefs, optional for non-Federally managed coral reefs) will comprise various Federal agency representatives, State (defined as the states of Florida and Hawaii; territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands; or any other territory or possession of the United States or separate sovereign in free association with the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem) or county resource management agency representatives, coral reef research centers, nongovernmental organizations, Native entities culturally affiliated with the subject reef, and other members deemed appropriate, such as "interested stakeholder groups," which

is defined as any of the following with an interest in an applicable coral reef or ecologically significant unit of coral reef:

- A business
- A commercial or recreational fisherman
- A recreationalist
- A Federal, State, Tribal, or local government unit with related jurisdiction
- An institution of higher education
- A nongovernmental organization

Established coral reef stewardship partnerships will be eligible to assist in development of the national coral reef resilience strategy, develop and implement coral reef action plans, and encourage coordination across partners. Members may also be eligible to apply directly for federal grants and/or receive funding as a subcontractor or subgrantee partner entity.

Coral reef action plans (mandatory for Federally managed coral reefs, optional for non-Federally managed coral reefs) will be prepared to guide management and restoration activities to be undertaken within the responsibilities and jurisdiction of the Federal or non-Federal reef manager. These plans may include discussion of topics including: short- and medium-term coral reef conservation and restoration objectives; contingencies for response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters; current adaptive management framework to inform research, monitoring, and assessment needs; and tools, strategies, and partnerships necessary to identify, monitor, and address pollution and water quality impacts to coral reef ecosystems. Once a coral reef action plan is in place, nearly all NOAA CRCP grant opportunities will require project consistency with the plan.

The application evaluation criteria in this program and weights for each criterion are provided below. Within each criterion, the subcriteria under each are to be holistically considered, evaluated and scored at the merit reviewer’s discretion with no individual weights given.

1. Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals (40 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, tribal, or local activities.

For Local Coral Community Group Support projects, does the proposal:
a. Directly support organizations located in a State which could be an eligible interested stakeholder group of a coral reef stewardship partnership?
b. Increase the organization’s capacity to apply for membership and participate in, or

develop, a future coral reef stewardship partnership and help to implement a coral reef action plan in the jurisdiction?

For National Coral Conservation Support projects, does the proposal:
a. Plan to increase coral conservation and resilience knowledge across multiple States through online and/or in-person training and skill development opportunities?
b. Develop tools that educate and address the needs of the general coral reef community that will be made publicly available at no charge?
c. Increase the capacity of other organizations to:
- Apply for membership and participate meaningfully in a future coral reef stewardship partnership and help to implement a coral reef action plan in the jurisdiction;
- Engage in community-based planning and management initiatives for the protection of coral reef ecosystems;
- Engage in coral propagation or restoration activities;
- Advance management or adaptation option to conserve and restore coral reef ecosystems; or
- Facilitate coral stewardship partnership development?

2. Technical and scientific merit (15 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.

a. Are the objectives clearly defined, focused, and realistic?
b. Is the approach appropriate for the stated goals and objectives?
c. Are the project goals and objectives achievable within the proposed time-frame?

3. Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (10 points): This criterion assesses whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the Ruth D. Gates Capacity Building Program: Local and National Support Grants, this includes the following categories:

For Local Coral Community Group Support projects:
a. Are the applicant, partners, or contractors involved in the project qualified?
b. Do the applicant, partners, or contractors have experience working in the jurisdiction?

For National Coral Conservation Support projects:
a. Are the applicant, partners, or contractors involved in the project qualified and have demonstrated experience working across diverse jurisdictions?

b. Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the target audience and/or the network to be created or leveraged?

4. Project costs (10 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.
a. Is the budget reasonable and commensurate with proposed work?
b. To what extent does the budget include the necessary level of detail and justification?
c. Does the applicant propose unallowable costs or other budgetary items of concern?

5. Outreach and education (25 points): This factor evaluates the extent to which the applicant includes the appropriate entities for a specific geography in the collaborative team and proposes activities that are likely to advance specified goals.

For Local Coral Community Group Support projects, how well does the proposal:
a. Include investigators from other agencies and institutions within the region included as key personnel on the project to capitalize on available expertise and promote a regional approach?
b. Demonstrate that the community or leveraged network has been engaged in development of the desired project outcomes?
c. Engage the public and local and regional stakeholders?
d. Leverage existing stakeholder group or local organizational knowledge?

For National Coral Conservation Support projects:
a. Does the proposal demonstrate that information generated by the project will reach its target audience and have a positive impact in local communities and the region?
b. Does the proposal outline an outreach or communication strategy that will improve and sustain dialogue and information sharing amongst the network members?
c. Does the project contain an audience appropriate outreach component?
d. To what extent does the proposed effort promote regional coordination and collaboration through a shared vision for how to improve coral reef ecosystems and/or management capacity within a regional or national context?

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 with coral reef and/or fisheries management experience 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. Merit reviewer ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

NOAA CRCP will also request and consider written comments on the proposal from each government agency or jurisdiction with management authority over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted.

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 to the Grants Officer based on the rank order and selection factors in Section V. C. 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. Proposals not initially funded may be considered for funding in another fiscal period, e.g. FY 25 without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

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, specific NOAA cooperative involvement with activities of each project, 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.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official, an official within the Office for Coastal Management (or their designee), anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the

following selection factors:

- Availability of funding;
- Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) priority funding area; or e) by project types;
- Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
- Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
- An applicant's prior award performance;
- Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
- Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Selected applications are expected to be awarded by July 30, 2024 and announced by October 30, 2024.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (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.

Risk Review: After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews. 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 Responsibility/Qualifications in the System for Award Management at SAM.gov (formerly 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. 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 made by the NOAA Grants Officer.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain specific award conditions as necessary, such as a limitation on the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements which may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These specific 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. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements

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

3. Terms and Conditions
The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. These terms will be provided in the award package in NOAA's electronic grants management system. A current version is available for review at https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf.

Also, NOAA will apply administrative terms, and a current version is at https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2021/Mar/Administrative%20Standard%20Award%20Conditions%20for%20NOAA%20Financial%20Assistance%20Awards%2002.18.2021.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. NEPA Requirements
As part of the application package, applicants should provide detailed information in the Project Narrative or in the supplementary materials about the location and state of the environment in which the activities are to be conducted and any environmental concerns. This information should include locations and/or maps showing project sites, species and habitats that may be affected, in-situ activities, and all other environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, effects on human health and safety, level of controversy of the proposed work, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, impacts to historical or cultural sites).

Under 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. The applicants selected for funding may be required to complete a subset of questions (based on activities outlined your application as identified by the Federal Program officer) of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance applicants accessible at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf. 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 work with NOAA on environmental compliance or refusal to implement any required action (e.g., best management practice, conservation recommendation, mitigation measure) related to consultations shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

The CRCP has a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS; https://coast.noaa.gov/data/coralreef_noaa_gov/about/resources/CRCP_FPEIS_07132020_NS_508c.pdf) and a joint Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation on the National Coral Reef Conservation Program and Mission: Iconic Reefs (BiCOp; https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/44324/noaa_44324_DS1.pdf) that streamlines the environmental evaluation and compliance process. NOAA will need to ensure the proposed work aligns with actions described in these documents and applicants must implement relevant 1) required best management practices (Appendix A of PEIS), 2) reasonable and prudent measures and conservation recommendations from the BiCoP, and/or 3) any other required actions from other environmental consultations (e.g., National Historic Preservation Act). If a successful applicant chooses not to implement requirements the CRCP programmatic documents, NOAA will need to complete independent environmental compliance actions, which may delay the funding or starting of the work.

In cases where 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.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA websites: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/ including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A for NEPA, https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-216-6a.

5. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
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 Federal 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.

6. Data Sharing Requirements
Refer to Section IV.B.5.4 of this announcement for details on data sharing requirements.

7. Limitation of Liability
Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. 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. 200.339-.343, 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. 200.340.

8. Paperwork Reduction Act (only required if publishing a Federal Register Notice)
This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Forms SF- 424, SF- 424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers found at https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRASearch. Form CD-511 and CD-512 are also required by the DOC. Applicants shall not submit form CD-512 with their application package; this form must remain on file with the applicant only. Form SF-LLL is required only if lobbying activities are being reported; otherwise, this form shall remain on file with the applicant only and not with the federal program office.

9. Review of Risk
The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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 addressed in a timely fashion 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 C.F.R. 200.208. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer.

10. 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.

11. NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards
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. The recipient must report to the NOAA Grants Officer and Program Officer if the PI, co-PI, or other key personnel are placed on administrative leave relating to a harassment finding or investigation. NOAA may take unilateral action as necessary to protect the safety of all personnel on a project supported by financial assistance, to include suspending or terminating an award or requiring a recipient to replace or remove personnel.

If the award involves the use of NOAA-operated facilities and/or vessels, the recipient must adhere to the following specific requirements:
Financial assistance awards involving the use of NOAA operated-facilities: NOAA Sexual

Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA-Operated Facilities (May 2018)
Financial assistance awards involving the use of vessels: NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving the Use of a Vessel(s) under NOAA Contract, Order, Grant, or Cooperative Agreement (May 2018).

Direct links to the requirements for awards involving the use of NOAA operated-facilities and/or vessels may be found at https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial. Note that these policies include required training.

12. 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 any award in this program 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 materials 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. 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 U.S. Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america/build-america-buy-america-act-federal-financial-assistance/.

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 additives —that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinyl chloride, 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).

Implementation of Domestic Sourcing Requirements. Prior to initiation of any construction that may arise in any award under this program, the Recipient will be required to inform the NOAA Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer whether it is using iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials as described in the above policy on Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials. In addition, the Recipient will be required to inform the NOAA Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer whether those materials are produced or manufactured in the United States, or alternatively, it is requesting one or more waivers, as described in this announcement. The Recipient will be required to coordinate with NOAA regarding its compliance with this policy.

To help federal agencies and recipients meet Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network™ provides a service to connect stakeholders, including recipients, to U.S. manufacturers that have relevant production capabilities and capacities to help fulfill current market and supply chain needs. Recipients considering a BABA non availability waiver are strongly encouraged to contact the NIST/MEP for assistance with supplier scouting services prior to seeking a BABA non availability waiver. Further information on the NIST/MEP supplier scouting services is available at: https://www.nist.gov/mep/supplier-scouting.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR 200.328 - .330 and DOC Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA’s electronic grants management system. 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 120 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 120 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.

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory to the extent required by the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to the final progress report or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must inventory tangible property at least once every two years and at award closeout. As necessary, 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 the equipment is no longer needed, 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 “Submit Additional Closeout Documents" as an award action request in NOAA’s electronic grants management system. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

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 issued. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards

over $25,000. See 2 CFR 170 at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the competition managers: Craig Reid <craig.a.reid@noaa.gov> and Victoria Barker <victoria.barker@noaa.gov>, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program.

VIII. Other Information

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 the 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.