NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

OAR National Sea Grant College Program (SG)

Funding Opportunity Title

FY2024-2025 National Sea Grant BIL Marine Debris Challenge Competition

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-23706

Assistance Listing Number(s)

Dates

Deadline: Letters of Intent due 01/31/2024

Full Proposals due 03/27/2024

Period of Performance: Projects should have a start date of September 1, 2024 and an end date of no later than August 31, 2027.

Funding Opportunity Description

The National Sea Grant College Program was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1966 (amended in 2020, Public Law 116-221) to support leveraged federal and state partnerships that harness the intellectual capacity of the nation's universities and research institutions to solve problems and generate opportunities in coastal communities.

Subject to the availability of funding in fiscal years 2024 and 2025, Sea Grant anticipates approximately $16,000,000 will be available to support innovative, transformational research to application (R2A) projects that will address the prevention and/or removal of marine debris, with award periods of three years. "Research to application" or R2A refers to research and development projects that transition into tangible, scalable outcomes and outputs. Examples include (but are not limited to) new prototypes, products, processes, or tools.

Proposals may address (but are not limited to) innovative or non-proven interception and/or removal technologies (i.e. prototype devices that require additional research and development prior to deployment, and/or need to be tested in new environments), reusable systems, microplastics, and/or nanoplastics. Successful proposals will build upon and extend existing knowledge and efforts related to marine debris; support broad, innovative research to address critical gaps with respect to marine debris; make that information available to communities and stakeholders; include Sea Grant education and extension professionals, community representatives, government, academic, non-governmental, tribal, and industry partners, as appropriate; and proactively incorporate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility at every level of the work. Proposals must include funding for Sea Grant education and/or extension personnel as collaborators. Community, government, academic, non-government, and industry stakeholder participation/involvement in projects is strongly encouraged. Applications DO NOT require non-federal match. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. To this end, applicants should note that cost sharing and leverage of other funds is an element considered in the evaluation criteria.

Applicants and awardees from the FY22/23 National Sea Grant Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Marine Debris Challenge Competition are eligible to apply for these funds. Current awardees may submit an application outlining how additional funds would advance their original project. These applicants should focus on scaling and operationalizing their original technology or method rather than additional research. NOAA also encourages new applicants or previous applicants with new project ideas to apply.

Fully integrated teams of collaborators noted above must submit proposals with a Sea Grant program (Sea Grant Colleges, Institutions, or Coherent Area Programs) as a partner. A Sea Grant program may participate in more than one proposal. Collaborations among Sea Grant programs are encouraged, as appropriate. Please note that it is not a requirement that investigators, including the PI, are part of a Sea Grant program. Contact information for each program can be found at https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About. All 34 Sea Grant programs are eligible to serve as partners and to submit applications. If you need further assistance in identifying a program to partner with please contact the National Sea Grant Office via email at sg.grants@noaa.gov

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-23706. Additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application are provided in the Sea Grant General Application Guide available at (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf).

This is one of two National Sea Grant federal funding opportunities in support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to address the prevention and removal of marine debris. This competition will support original, innovative, and transformational marine debris prevention and removal research that pushes the boundaries of existing technologies and approaches, changes the current landscape of marine debris mitigation, and ties that research to tangible outputs. This competition will also advance the goal of the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 Initiative. Established by Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, the Justice40 Initiative aims to provide 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments, such as climate, clean energy, and other areas, flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

A second opportunity (NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-23704), the "National Sea Grant BIL Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions," is available for creating coalitions among areas, groups, or communities, especially those that have been systemically underserved or disadvantaged, to address marine debris prevention and removal. These two Sea Grant BIL NOFOs complement two Marine Debris Program funding opportunities (NOAA-NOS-ORR-2024-2007993 "FY24 NOAA Marine Debris Removal under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law"; and NOAA-NOS-ORR-2024-2007991 "FY24 NOAA Marine Debris Interception Technologies under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law") that will fund large-scale marine debris removal and interception projects.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA works through Sea Grant institutions to increase the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, and conservation of the Nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources by providing assistance to promote a strong educational base, responsive research and training activities, broad and prompt dissemination of knowledge and techniques, and multidisciplinary approaches to environmental problems, in accordance with 33 USC 1121(b).

There are many types, sources, and causes of marine debris, defined by statute as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 C.F.R. § 909.1). Marine debris has long been a significant issue and may include (but is not limited to) plastic waste, trash, derelict vessels, lost or discarded fishing gear, and microplastics. The mass production of plastics, and their ubiquity of application and use across every economic sector, has ultimately resulted in an inescapable global marine debris problem. The United States is the top generator of plastic waste in the world (Law 2020), with a per capita generation rate of 2.22 to 2.72 kg per person per day (EREF 2016, Powell and Chertow 2019, U.S. EPA 2021a). The management of solid plastic waste varies per state and local government and consists of landfilling, recycling, and incineration. An unquantified amount of waste, however, is mismanaged and leaked into the environment. Recognizing the imperative to address the fate of plastics into marine environments, in 2004, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy identified marine "debris," a term used to describe a wide-range of aquatic-solid waste pollution, as a national ocean priority (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste). To strengthen efforts in prevention and mitigation, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), has directed NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program to execute $50.0 million over five years for the prevention and removal of marine debris. While plastics are a key focus, this work will also address other relevant types of marine debris, as appropriate. This work will complement broader NOAA efforts, particularly, the National Ocean Service's Marine Debris Program, focused on active removal, cleanup, mitigation, and prevention of marine debris. Each Sea Grant program will determine and prioritize local needs and research-driven solutions that fully integrate the needs of historically underserved communities as defined by Executive Order 13985 (Section 2(b)).

This competition will support innovative research to application (R2A) projects that will address the prevention and/or removal of marine debris and provide the potential for transformational behavior change. "Research to application" or R2A refers to research that transitions into tangible outputs. Example outputs include (but are not limited to) inventive prototypes, commercial products, specialized services, or cutting-edge tools. Big ideas and risk taking are encouraged. Planning and capacity building activities are allowed but must accompany subsequent implementation activities; the end result of these projects cannot be solely academic or non-tangible outputs (e.g., scientific publications, awareness/training). A strong application will clearly outline how the project will produce new and effective deliverables that change the landscape for marine debris prevention and/or removal. Projects will communicate these outputs to the public (communities, stakeholders, industry, etc.) with the aim of addressing critical gaps with respect to marine debris. Proposals may address (but are not limited to) innovative or non-proven interception and/or removal technologies (i.e. prototype devices that require additional research and development prior to deployment, and/or need to be tested in new environments), reusable systems, and/or the detection and mitigation of microplastics and/or nanoplastics. See Section I.B. Program Priorities for more details.

Competitive projects will include funding for Sea Grant education and extension professionals and display a diverse coalition of partners including (but not limited to) community representatives, stakeholder groups, and industry collaborators. Projects will proactively incorporate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility at every level of the work.

Principal investigators of proposals selected for funding will be required to participate in annual National Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings to share results of work conducted, discuss challenges, synthesize outputs, and to plan next steps. Cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support will make projects more competitive. Applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. To this end, applicants should note that cost sharing and leverage of other funds is an element considered in the evaluation criteria.

B. Program Priorities

This competition will fund proposals that invest in transformative marine debris research to application (R2A) projects that will show clear and measurable outcomes and applications for marine debris prevention and removal. Projects should have a clear pathway for research or ideas to transition into application, operation, or commercialization by relevant stakeholders, and have the potential for long-term utilization. Proposal topics should support priorities laid out in relevant documents, such as the NAS 2021 report, Section 132 Draft Report on Microfiber Pollution, Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution, relevant regional marine debris action plans (https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/emergency-response-guides-and-regional-action-plans#pub-term-145), strategic plans, and/or other documents, such as:

- Development of innovative or non-proven removal and/or interception technologies (i.e., prototype devices that require additional research and development prior to deployment, and/or need to be tested in new environments) and reusable systems that prevent debris from entering the marine environment.
- Innovative solutions for mitigation and clean-up of abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear and including sustainable disposal methods and/or recycling of end of life gear..
- Microplastics, nanoplastics, and microfibers, including:
    - Understanding the effects of microplastics, nanoplastics, and microfibers on human health and marine biota (including immune responses, effects on cell growth and tissue formation, and translocation once inside humans or biota
    - Mitigation of the effects of microplastics,nanoplastics, and microfibers, such as:
        1. Mitigation of microfibers during laundering
        2. Mitigation of microplastics via green infrastructure (rain gardens, bioswales, other bioretention options)
        3. Potential mitigation options for stormwater and/or wastewater
        4. Potential mitigation options for biosolids
        5. Potential mitigation or best practices for reducing microplastics and microfibers from construction related debris, geotextiles, and agricultural debris.
    - Detection methods for microplastics, nanoplastics, and microfibers in products, organisms, and/or the environment.
    - Improvements to wastewater treatment that eliminate microplastics and nanoplastics from effluent and sludge.
- Mitigation of the impacts of plastics in food webs (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste).

This competition may also fund current awardees from the FY22 National Sea Grant Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Marine Debris Challenge Competition. These applicants should propose activities that build on their current award and focus on scaling, operationalizing, and/or commercializing their prototype, product, process, or tool.

Proposed projects should also:

1. Be responsive to state, local, tribal, and regional needs within a national framework.
2. Leverage existing Sea Grant and partner investments and capacities.
3. Embed diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) fully into the effort.
4. Show how this work will be enhanced through partnerships, including collaboration among Sea Grant programs, and with other appropriate partners.

Proposals should address any of the priorities in this section along with the four principles above to be acceptable for this opportunity.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the National Sea Grant College Program Act of 1966, as amended (33 USC 1121 et seq.) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (Pub.L. 117–58).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to the availability of funding, this announcement describes how eligible applicants should apply for the National Sea Grant BIL Marine Debris Challenge Competition. Sea Grant anticipates having approximately $16,000,000 to fund approximately 5-12 projects of up to three years' duration. We expect the average project size will be between $1,000,000 and $2,000,000; however, applications may request up to $3,000,000 in federal funds addressing the program priorities.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards, or that any application will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if a project fails to receive full funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is September 1, 2024, with projects to be completed by August 31, 2027

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument is a cooperative agreement to an eligible institution. A cooperative agreement is used when substantial involvement of the federal government during performance of the proposed work is anticipated. The nature of the substantial involvement includes strategic engagement with the National Sea Grant Marine Debris Team, support from National Sea Grant Communication efforts, and annual National Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

This opportunity is open to any person or group within the United States or its territories, as well as tribal nations within those geographies.

Applicants must submit proposals in partnership with a relevant Sea Grant program. Please note that it is not a requirement that investigators, including the PI, are part of a Sea Grant program. Contact information for Sea Grant programs can be found at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About. If you need further assistance in identifying a program to partner with, please contact one of the Sea Grant Marine Debris Team listed below in Section VII. Agency Contacts.

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities, or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use.

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) by recruiting, retaining, and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. We encourage applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this opportunity.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required for this competition. However, cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support will make projects more competitive. Applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. Community, government, academic, non-government, and industry stakeholder participation/involvement in projects is strongly encouraged through cost sharing, leveraged funds, and/or in-kind match.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available online and can be downloaded from www.grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-23706. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of these required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

The submitting Sea Grant program or applicant must redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII that must be redacted from the application includes, but is not limited to, social security number, date of birth, student identification number (from transcripts) or other information which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This proposal package will be using a different set of forms than Sea Grant programs have completed in the past. Instead of the "SF424 NOAA Standard Non-Construction Application Package" of forms, this application will include the "SF424 NOAA Research & Related (R&R) Forms Package." **While many of the forms may be familiar, please pay special attention to the headings and instructions in this section.** Additional form-specific guidance may be available at a later date.

Required Elements:

Applications must include the following elements. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

Letter of Intent Requirements

Applicants must submit a letter of intent (LOI) before a full proposal is submitted. Applicants that do not submit a LOI will not be eligible to submit a full proposal. Full proposals should not deviate greatly from the LOI. However, LOIs are not wholly binding and the applicant may tweak details of their project before submitting the full proposal as their research to application plan evolves. LOIs are meant to provide Sea Grant with metrics on the scope and size of the application pool to assist with reviewer recruitment and review event planning.

The letter of intent should be no longer than 2 pages and will include:

- Working project title
- PI Name(s)
- PI Position(s) and Affiliation
- Partnering Sea Grant program

- PI Contact Information
- Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach, and how it will be transformative within the proposal's scope of action
- The approximate funding to be requested

Letters of Intent (LOIs) will allow the NSGO to gauge interest and topics that may be submitted. To be eligible for awards, LOIs must be received via email by the Program Managers (sg.grants@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on January 31, 2024.

Full Proposal Required Elements

(please also see VIII. Other Information for additional post-application required elements for submission):

1. **Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)**

   This form must be completed and include a profile for the Principal Investigator and any co-PI(s). CVs and Current and Pending Support for each person's profile will also be attached to this form. The first listed PD(s)/PI(s) on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g., agency login" field of the SF424 form. Failure to register in eRA Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

2. **Research and Related Budget Form**

   a. Research and Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Form *(OMB Control No. 4040-0001)*

   The Research and Related Budget is a single form that will need to be filled out covering the entire award by budget period following the instructions from Grants.gov.

   b. Budget Justification Attachment

   At the end of the Research and Related Budget form (see 4.a above), "Section L" provides space for one attachment titled, "Budget Justification." The budget justification must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget narratives) in the following order and format. Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget narratives must be included for each individual project within an application. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found at: NOAA Grants Management Division's Budget Narrative Guidance

   i. Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)

   Sea Grant 90-4 forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form should be completed for each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3). The Sea Grant 90-4 form can be downloaded at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation. Guidance on filling out these forms is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guide.

   ii. Budget Narrative

   For each year of the project (or each individual project within an application), a budget narrative is required. Each budget narrative should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each budget narrative should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 form, as appropriate.

3. **Research & Related Other Project Information Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)**

   This form must be completed for the application, and should also be used to attach the Project Abstract Summary Form, the Project Narrative, Bibliography & References Cited, and any other relevant forms or information as applicable. See form-specific instructions available on Grants.gov for additional instructions as needed.

   a. Project Summary/Abstract Attachment

This attachment should be the completed **Project Abstract Summary Form** ***(Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0019)*** that is available as part of the application package. Using 4,000 characters or less, the Project Abstract should provide an overview of the application. Ensure the Project Abstract succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. It should be a self-contained description of the application and should contain a general statement of objectives and methods to be employed. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a technically literate lay reader. Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive or proprietary/confidential information. This project abstract information (as submitted) will be made available on public websites and/or databases including USAspending.gov.

Project Abstract Elements:

- Use the following format:
    - Purpose:
    - Activities to be performed:
    - Expected Outcomes:
    - Intended Beneficiaries:
    - Subrecipient Activities:
- Keep it short. In most cases, each element above should be a couple of sentences to a paragraph in length.
- DO NOT repeat the Proposal Title. The Proposal Title is always presented with the Project Description, so including it in the abstract is not necessary.
- Include a high quality description that includes specificity regarding the purpose of the project. Characteristics of strong abstracts include a plain language description of the purpose for the project (which may include specific performance goals, indicators, milestones, or expected outcomes of the project), activities to be performed, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiary or recipient.
- Keep it simple. Do not use abbreviations, acronyms, technical terminology, or agency-specific terms. The intended audience is Congress and the general public, not specific interested parties and/or federal employees. The education level of the reader should be assumed to be the fifth grade of elementary school. Even those who are highly educated will appreciate a simply written document when they have hundreds of projects to review in one sitting.

b. Project Narrative Attachment

The total number of pages in the project description should not exceed fifteen (15) pages (excluding the cover page, any letters of support, or any current and pending support). Excess pages will not be included in the review. Applicants do not need to use the entire 15-page maximum. Depending on the proposed activities, a shorter description may suffice. Any works cited, CVs, letters of support, and current and pending support sections included do not contribute to the suggested page limit.

Project Narrative Elements:

- Cover page (does not count towards page limit)
    - Project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of co-PIs.
    - Budget overview - Total cost of requested funding by partner.
    - Project Abstract
- Project background
    - Explain the specific marine debris problem(s) this project seeks to address and justify its importance.
    - Explain why this problem would benefit from innovative solutions.
- Project objectives
    - Provide a list of clearly defined project objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity.
- Project details
    - Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives, including how these methods will be innovative and/or transformational.

- Provide a list of all project partners and explain how this project leverages the expertise of researchers and stakeholders.
- Provide a description of any cost sharing and/or leveraged funds.

- Anticipated outcomes and deliverables
  - Provide a list of expected outcomes and deliverables that will result from your project. Explain how these tools, technologies, data products, and/or management practices will be directly applied to the current and future needs of communities and stakeholders.
- Project timeline
  - Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work, which covers the entire duration of the project. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and release of deliverables.
- Community engagement, DEIJA, and outreach plan
  - In this section, describe how the proposed activity was developed in collaboration with community members - including traditionally underserved groups - that are impacted by marine debris or its sources.
  - Describe how the work will provide long-term engagement and support to those groups.
  - Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) related to diversity, equity, and inclusion: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visioning/DiversityInclusion.
- Human Subjects Approval
  - Applicants submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects should state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.
- Letters of support (if included, does not count towards page limit)
- All letters of support should be included here. Required in the instance that a Sea Grant program is applying on behalf of a partnership of multiple Sea Grant programs; otherwise, recommended but optional.
- Current and pending support (if included, does not count towards page limit)
  - Describe any current or pending sources of support if applicable.

c. *Bibliography & References Cited Attachment (if applicable)*

If applicable, provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Project Narrative. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Include only bibliographic citations. Applicants should be especially careful to follow scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the application.

4. Additional Application Package Forms

In addition to the forms required above, standard federal forms and assurances are required and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov. These include:

a. SF-424 R&R Form *(Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)*

This form, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," must identify the entire funding period, as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and any non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution's accurate EIN and DUNS and point of contact, and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee. Total federal and non-federal amounts listed in the SF-424 R&R, the Cumulative Budget of the Research and Related Budget form, and overall Sea Grant 90-4 form must be the same.

b. SF-424B Assurances *(Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007)*

The form, titled “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs,” must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

c. CD-511 *(Grants.gov, US DOC)*

The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

d. SF-LLL *(Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046) - optional form, include if appropriate*

This form, titled “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” is an optional form and should be included if appropriate. If included, it must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

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

Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)

- **Applicants must ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full and includes detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information.**
    1. A separate questionnaire must be completed for each relevant action/project in the proposal.
    2. The questionnaire can be found here.
    3. Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire, including how to describe work that will not involve any environmental impact, can be found here. Examples of questionnaires can be found here.

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

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent must be received via email by the Competition Manager (sg.grants@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Complete applications must be received and validated by grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, March 27, 2024

Incomplete or late applications will not be reviewed. Applicants should be aware that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Eligible Sea Grant programs should consider this process in developing their submission timeline. For eligible Sea Grant program applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

F. Funding Restrictions

The Sea Grant Act at 33 USC 1124(d)(2) states:

“No payment under any grant or contract under this section may be applied to:

(A) the purchase or rental of any land; or

(B) the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel; except that payment under any such grant or contract may be applied to the short-term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings which are in direct support of any Sea Grant Program or project and may, if approved by the Secretary, be applied to the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures, or to the rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of activities under any Sea Grant Program or project.”

G. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

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

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

V. Application Review Information

Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	**Maximum Points:** 30
This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. This criterion assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to program priorities. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following: a. Marine debris priority area - Does the project address a significant marine debris problem? Does the problem have regional or national significance? (10 points) b. Innovation and transformation - Does the project propose innovative and transformational solutions to the specific marine debris problem? Does the project employ creative thinking and new ideas? Projects that propose pilot studies that have the potential to be scaled up or duplicated will score higher than proposals with a less ambitious range. (10 points)	

c. Research to application - Does the project have a clear pathway for research or ideas to transition into application, operation, or commercialization by relevant stakeholders? (10 points)

2. Technical/scientific merit	**Maximum Points:** 35

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.

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

a. Project description and milestones - Does the proposal include sufficient detail to assess the merit of the planned actions? Does the proposal include a realistic timeline of key milestones and deliverables? (10 points)

b. Methodological strength - Are the proposed actions feasible from a biological and engineering perspective? Does the proposed approach have a sufficient chance of success? Are performance measures and metrics of success explicitly stated by the applicant? (10 points)

c. Deliverables - Does the proposal include clear deliverables? Are the deliverables likely to measurably mitigate marine debris? Does the proposal include sufficient detail regarding how the applicant will transition project activities into said deliverables? Are the deliverables useful and usable to communities and stakeholders? (10 points)

d. Project resilience and longevity - Does the proposal describe the susceptibility of potential project sites and activities to likely natural hazards, climate change, and other long-term impacts and discuss how the proposal would improve long term resilience? Does the proposal have an appropriate plan to sustain and maintain its deliverables beyond the period of the award? (5 points)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants	**Maximum Points:** 10

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

This criterion assesses whether the applicant and partners possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed activities.

a. Does the project team demonstrate the necessary mix of technical and disciplinary experience and background in marine debris, planning, design, and management to successfully carry out the project? (10 points)

4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement, DEIJA, and Outreach	**Maximum Points:** 20

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

This criterion assesses whether the project effectively engages local communities in a few ways. In particular, this criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused, effective, and equitable education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA’s mission to protect the Nation’s natural resources, Sea Grant's strategic focus areas, and the goals of the individual competition announcement to target audiences. This criterion also assesses how well the project engages tribes and underserved communities in addressing marine debris issues, current and historical inequities, and builds lasting partnerships to address marine debris. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

a. Inclusive planning and engagement - Are local communities - including tribes and underserved communities - meaningfully engaged in project planning and activities? Is there a clear strategy to obtain input from a diverse range of stakeholders? (5 points)

b. Education - Is there a clear strategy to share information about the project's work on marine debris to a broad audience through formal or non-formal education? (5 points)

c. Sea Grant engagement - Are Sea Grant activities fully supported and utilized? Is proposed Sea Grant work clearly and appropriately tied to the work in a meaningful way? (5 points)

d. Marine Debris Action Plans - Does the project tie into existing activities and partnerships outlined in regional Marine Debris Action Plans (https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/emergency-response-guides-and-regional-action-plans#pub-term-145) or support priorities laid out in relevant documents, such as the NAS 2021 report, Section 132 Draft Report on Microfiber Pollution, or Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution? (5 points)

5. Project Costs	**Maximum Points:** 15

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

This criterion assesses whether the project budget is realistic and commensurate with the project's needs and timeframe. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

a. Budget appropriateness - Does the budget cover the proposed activities? Are the spending levels appropriate compared to market value? (5 points)

b. Cost sharing and leveraged funds - Does the applicant complement NOAA's investment with other funding sources, including non-federal contributions, federal leverage, or in-kind support? Does the cost sharing demonstrate meaningful partnerships between government, industry, academia, and communities? (10 points)

Review and Selection Process

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review.

Applications that pass the administrative review will be reviewed by at least three independent reviewers drawn from experts in a range of disciplines that are relevant to the applications. Each proposal will receive at least three written reviews from the reviewers assessing its merits with regard to the evaluation criteria. These reviews will be averaged to produce a rank order. The selecting official shall award in the rank order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the selection factors provided in Section V.C. The selecting official shall make final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

The program manager, NEPA staff lead, or grants specialist may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the merit or administrative correctness of the application and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.

2. Balance/distribution of funds:

a. geographically

b. by type of institution

c. by type of partners

d. by research priority

e. by project types

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.

4. Program priorities and policy factors.

5. Applicant's prior award performance.

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups.

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Investigators may be asked to answer questions; and/or modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets (including overall funding level) to address the issues raised by the reviewers, the competition manager, the Selecting Official, or the Grants Officer before an award is made. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, projects are expected to start September 1, 2024.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. 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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Reporting

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

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

Recipients will meet regularly with the National Sea Grant Marine Debris Team to discuss progress on the project.

VII. Agency Contacts

The National Sea Grant Office mailing address is:
NOAA Sea Grant
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

sg.grants@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

Demographics Information

NOAA will not provide collected demographics information to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.
Applicants must submit documentation by either including a statement within the application, or via email to sg.grants@noaa.gov, that they have responded to the new requirement to provide the following information for all named collaborators on the proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035).
Note: Applicants may use their own method of collecting this information. The NSGO has also developed an online form (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdIjYevtFZD2cFT5e_6nsd_YNNbgOuu-i7UdcPVIDN5VndaVg/viewform) as an optional method for collection. Submission to this form would count as fulfillment of this requirement.
1. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? List all that apply.

a) Black
b) Latino
c) Indigenous and/or Native American
d) Asian American
e) Pacific Islander
f) Other person of color
g) Members of religious minorities
h) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
i) Persons with disabilities
j) Persons who live in rural areas
k) Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
l) No, I do not identify with any of these groups

Section 508 Compliance

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other federal employees, and also by federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

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

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.