ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2013 NOAA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training (BWET)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-NCBO-2013-2003501

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.457, Chesapeake Bay Studies

Dates: The deadline for letters of intent is 5:00 PM Eastern Time November 5, 2012. The deadline for applications is 5:00 PM Eastern Time on December 19, 2012

Funding Opportunity Description: B-WET Chesapeake is a competitive grant program that supports existing, high quality environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new, innovative programs, and encourages capacity building and partnership development for environmental education programs throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. Successful projects advance the goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan and the Mid Atlantic Elementary and Secondary Environmental Literacy Strategy by providing hands-on environmental education about issues affecting the Chesapeake Bay watershed for students, related professional development for teachers, and/or capacity building for watershed education. These Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) integrate field experiences with classroom activities and instruction in NOAA-related content.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. B-WET was established in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and currently exists in seven regions: Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, New England, California, Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and Great Lakes.

The goal of this funding opportunity is to support K-12 environmental education programs that provide students with meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEEs) related to the Chesapeake Bay and related teacher professional development and capacity building.

The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are an excellent resource for environmental education. Its tidal and non-tidal waters and the surrounding landscape provide hands-on, place-based laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the greater environment.

Successful B-WET projects provide formal education that supports the NOAA Education Strategic Plan and the Citizen Stewardship objectives of Chesapeake Bay Executive Order.

Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET Program, have been shown to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), thus contributing to NOAA's obligations under America COMPETES.

NOAA B-WET recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Environmentally literate individuals can become effective future workers, problem solvers, and thoughtful community leaders and participants.

For purposes of this solicitation, MWEEs are defined as follows:

Experiences are investigative or project oriented.

Experiences should be centered around questions, problems, and issues and be investigated through data collection, observation, and hands-on activities. Experiences should stimulate observation, motivate critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, and instill confidence in students. Where appropriate, technology such as computers, probeware, and GPS equipment, should be integrated throughout the instructional process. Experiences such as tours, gallery visits, simulations, demonstrations, or nature walks may be instructionally useful, but alone do not constitute a meaningful experience.

Experiences are an integral part of the instructional program.

Experiences should be clearly part of what is occurring concurrently in the classroom.

The experience should be part of the curriculum and aligned with the academic standards.

Experiences should occur where and when they fit into the instructional sequence.

Experiences do not have to be based solely on science disciplines. Experiences could involve the use of materials, resources, and instruments to address multiple topics, such as maritime heritage, history, economics, math, English, art, and the cultural significance of our natural resources. Experiences make appropriate connections between subject areas and reflect an integrated approach to learning.

Experiences are part of a sustained activity.

Meaningful experiences are part of a sustained activity that stimulates and motivates the student from beginning to end. Though a watershed experience itself may occur as one specific event occurring in one day, the total duration leading up to and following the experience should involve a significant investment of instructional time. An experience should consist of three general parts - a preparation phase; an action phase; and a reflection phase. Projects should provide teachers with the support, materials, resources, and information needed to conduct these three parts.

* The preparation phase should focus on a question, problem, or issue and involve

students in discussions about it.

* The action phase should include one or more outdoor experiences sufficient to conduct the project, make the observations, or collect the data required. It is strongly encouraged that the action phase includes restoration projects or activities that result in the environment changing.

* The reflection phase should refocus on the question, problem, or issue; analyze the conclusions reached; evaluate the results; assess the activity and the learning; and include sharing and communication of the results.

Experiences consider the watershed as a system.

Meaningful watershed educational experiences should make a direct connection to the marine or estuarine environment. Experiences do not have to be water-based activities; as long as there is an intentional connection made to the watershed, water quality, and the coastal and marine environment, watershed experiences may include terrestrial activities (e.g., erosion control, buffer creation, groundwater protection, and pollution prevention).

Experiences are enhanced by NOAA products, services, or personnel.

NOAA has a wealth of applicable products and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can heighten the impact of outdoor experiences. For example,

NOAA data can be used to supplement or contextualize the information collected by students. In addition, the inclusion of NOAA products and services in classroom activities will increase awareness of the agency's vast resources and may lead to better understanding of its mission. NOAA personnel have technical knowledge and experience that can serve to complement the classroom teacher's strengths and augment the array of resources for the learning. Additionally, these professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and as natural resources stewards, thus promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers.

Information on the B-WET Chesapeake program, including examples of education partnerships that have been funded to date, can be found on the world wide web at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bwet . Potential applicants are invited to contact the

NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (contact information in Section VII) before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of partnership ideas to B-WET goals and objectives.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must address either: (1) Systemic MWEE Implementation, (2) Capacity Building, (3) Urban STEM Model Replication, or 4) Continuing Projects

1. Systemic MWEE Implementation

Systemic MWEE programs strive to reach the entire student and teacher population in one or more grades in an entire school system or recognized sub-unit of a school system.

Systemic education does not target one school (unless it is the only school at that level in a school system) or a percentage of schools from multiple systems. A system can be a division, region, county, city, or even state. Applications for systemic programs can come from any applicant type, not just school divisions and departments of education. Programs that are systemic encourage ownership from a broad range of constituents and promote long term sustainability of the MWEE program in a school division.

Systemic programs require substantial involvement of the school system that can come in the form of mandating MWEEs, schoolyard habitats, or other relevant topics in the curriculum; providing funding for teacher substitutes, resource teachers, equipment, or buses; mandating MWEE professional development; and more. School systems creating partnerships with multiple environmental education providers is often necessary to ensure all students receive outdoor learning experiences. High-level system support from superintendents, school boards, and principals is reflective of a successful systemic program.

Under Systemic implementation, teacher professional development should be combined with long term K-12 classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for the students of these trained teachers. Professional development opportunities must be at least 3 days in duration, deliver training on both content and instruction in the

outdoors, include year-long support for teachers, and include a plan for how the teachers will be involved in implementing watershed education with their students. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources. Students should receive multiple outdoor experiences that are fully supported in the classroom by their teachers to ensure that the concepts of watershed education are reinforced throughout the school year. Outdoor experiences can occur on or near school grounds.

2. Capacity Building

These projects build the capacity of agencies and organizations to develop, deliver, and sustain comprehensive STEM or environmental education programs that advance the MWEE at the state or regional level. Capacity building proposals may focus on one state or multiple states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Capacity building may include establishing, developing, or implementing a state environmental literacy plan; training pre-service, in-service or non-formal educators; or developing curriculum/resource guides, websites, or workshops where there is a demonstrated gap in content or resources. Capacity building requires networking among educational organizations and to the extent possible should aim to coordinate and/or link major education or natural resource agencies and organizations throughout a state or region.

Capacity building is a complex, long-term effort that can take years to successfully design and implement. Therefore, all capacity building proposals must indicate how the project identified in the proposal is part of a larger state or regional capacity building effort.

3. Urban STEM Model Replication

The NCBO seeks applications to pilot the replication of highly successful urban STEM programs to urban communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Models should offer a suite of community and school-based programs and create a pipeline for future environmental leaders and professionals. Programs within the model should generate curiosity and engage youth, families, and the broader community in science learning and hands-on conservation projects that are relevant to their daily lives. To build upon this base, additional programs should stress scientific literacy, with elementary and middle school students engaging in hands-on science and environmental service, and teachers supported through professional development and resources. Finally, programming should be offered that prepares scientific leaders. Upper level students should engage in intensive out-of-

school science programs and support services that provide a pathway to science and conservation careers.

Models proposed by the applicant to be replicated may be from any urban area in the United States and must use the environment as a platform to teach the principals of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The proposed program should work with youth from a specific community that allows for working longitudinally with the same cohort of students across elementary, middle and high school. Applications demonstrating strong partnerships across multiple implementing organizations within the target community are strongly encouraged.

Other criteria for the Model include:

" Situated within a STEM and knowledge-based economy to provide mentors, internship and career opportunities, and funding.

" Mechanisms should be in place to maintain student continuity (e.g. through feeder school system).

" Incorporation of community-based approaches to develop and enhance programming and organizational systems.

If the lead applicant is not the organization administering the original model, it must demonstrate a partnership commitment from the originating organization, indicating their support and detailing their involvement in the replication process. We anticipate a significant portion of the grant term to be dedicated to planning and partnership development (years 1 and 2), with out-years (years 2-3) transitioning to piloting the model.

4. Continuing Projects

The NCBO has existing grants that were identified as multi-year projects in previous application processes. Renewal grants will be awarded to continue these multi-year projects under this announcement pending adequate and timely submission of project performance reports. These projects will not undergo competitive review through this application process. Therefore, funding for new proposals may be limited due to funding of renewal projects.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 USC 893a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that approximately $2M may be available in FY 2013 in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds. Funding is anticipated to maintain partnerships for up to 3 years duration, but is dependent on funding made available annually by Congress. The NCBO anticipates that typical awards for B-WET will range from $25,000 to $200,000 annually.

NCBO anticipates that typical awards for Systemic MWEE Implementation will range from $75,000 to $200,000 annually. Projects focusing on Capacity building will range from $25,000 to $75,000 annually. Projects that address Urban STEM Model Replication will range up to $200,000 annually.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that

may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications for partnerships should cover a project period between 1 and 3 years.

Projects that request multi-year funding must include in their submission a full description of the activities and estimated budget by line item (e.g. personnel, equipment, supplies) for all proposed work for each year.

Multi-year project period requests may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but once awarded, multi-year partnerships will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years.

NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in subsequent years. A recommendation to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) to continue an award in subsequent years, or to extend the period of performance, is at the total discretion of the selecting official based on recommendations by the Federal Program Officer.

Single year requests or projects that NOAA chooses to fund for only one year will be required to re-compete in subsequent years. Any continuation of the award period will depend on the submission of a new proposal subject to review, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding.

Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the B-WET competitive process are anticipated, but will depend on funding levels and resources available to support new projects.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement under the terms of this notice. Applications funded through cooperative agreements will include substantial involvement of the Federal government which may include, but is not limited to, liaison activities between the grantee and NOAA personnel who are contributing data or expertise to the project.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-through-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, community-based and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments. For-profit organizations, foreign institutions, foreign organizations and foreign government agencies are not eligible to apply. For-profit and foreign organizations can be project partners. Federal agencies are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this announcement, but may be project partners.

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program, however, the NCBO strongly encourages applicants applying for either area of interest to share as much of the costs of the award as possible. Funds from other Federal awards may not be considered matching funds. The nature of the contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the review process. Priority selection will be given to proposals that propose cash rather than in-kind contributions.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Applications with budgets in which the Federal share requested from NOAA is less than $25,000 annually or more than $200,000 annually will not be merit reviewed.

Letters of intent are required and must be submitted on time. Applications that have not been preceded by the submission of an on-time letter of intent will not be merit reviewed. See section IV.C for submission information.

Applications that are lacking any of the required elements of the application or do not follow the form prescribed in IV.B will not be merit reviewed.

Applications received after the deadline will not be merit reviewed. See additional details

in Section IV. C.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Information on the B-WET Chesapeake program, including examples of watershed education partnerships that have been funded to date, can be found on the world wide web at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bwet . Potential applicants are invited to contact the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of partnership ideas to B-WET goals and objectives.

Electronic application packages are strongly encouraged and are available at: http://www.grants.gov/.

If the applicant has difficulty accessing Grants.gov or downloading the required forms from the NOAA website, they should contact Kevin Schabow , NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A, Annapolis, MD 21403, or by phone at 410-295-3145, or fax to 410-267-5666, or via email at Kevin.schabow@noaa.gov. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office does not have a direct telephonic device for the deaf (TDD

capabilities can be reached through the State of Maryland-supplied TDD contact number, 800-735-2258, between the hours of 8 AM-4:30 PM)

B. Content and Form of Application

This document requests letters of intent and full applications. The provisions for application preparation are mandatory. Proposals must be complete and follow the format described in this notice. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NCBO or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through http://www.grants.gov. If applying by paper application, applicants are required to submit one copy of the full proposal with original signatures on all required forms.

1. Form

The page margin on standard letter-size paper must be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right. All pages should be numbered. The typeface must be standard 11-point size or larger and must be clear and easily legible. All narrative sections of the application should be single spaced and consist of the sections described in Section IV.B.2.

The entire narrative portion of the Work Plan (which includes the Project Summary, Project Description, Sustainability, Outreach and Education, and Project Evaluation) shall not exceed 10 pages - the Project Summary (1 page) and up to 9 pages total for the Project Description, Sustainability, Outreach and Education, and Project Evaluation. The Detailed Budget and Appendices (i.e., Budget Justification, Timeline, Logic Model, Technical Expertise and Qualifications, Partnership Commitment Letters, and Results from Prior NOAA Support) are not included in the page limit. Additional informational material will be discarded prior to review.

2. Content

Required Elements for Letters of Intent:

Letters of intent are required for all applications and should briefly summarize the proposed project, identify the project's partners, explain how the project will address

NOAA's education goals and the goal of this funding opportunity, and provide an estimate of the budget request. Letters of intent should not exceed three (3) pages of standard letter-size paper. Failure to submit a letter of intent by the deadline will result in applicants being ineligible to submit full applications for this funding opportunity.

Required Elements for Applications:

a) At the time of application submission, all applicants anticipating direct funding shall submit the following forms with signatures of the authorized representative of the submitting institution. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.):

* Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424

* Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: SF-424A

* Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B

Additionally, the following Department of Commerce forms will be required if proposal is selected for funding:

* Certifications Regarding Lobbying: CD-511

* Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable, see instructions on form)

(i) Project Summary: (1 page):

* Project Title

* Priority Area(s): i.e., Capacity Building, Systemic MWEE Implementation, Urban STEM Model Replication

* Project duration: 12 to 36 month project period starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month.

* Organization and Partnerships: Briefly describe your organization and list your key partners for this grant, if applicable. Partnerships are encouraged.

* Summary: Provide a brief statement that explains the need for your project and its goals and objectives. In addition, identify what NOAA topic you will address and/or NOAA assets you will use. Your summary should use layman's terms to provide reviewers with an understanding of the purpose and expected outcomes of your educational project. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read this paragraph and grasp your plan.

* Delivery Method: Explain how you will reach your audience, such as workshops, field trips, interactive programs, conferences, etc.

* Audience: Describe the demographics of your target audience including the school division(s) and the number and types of participants you expect to reach, such as teachers and students and the specific grade levels, environmental educators, principals, etc

* Budget Information: Total Federal funding requested this fiscal year; Total Non-Federal match for this fiscal year. Total multi-year request and match (if applicable)

(ii) Project Description: Describe in detail what your project will achieve with the following headings: What, Why, Who, and How. Explain each aspect of your proposal clearly and address each topic below. Please address all of the following to ensure that grant reviewers can fully comprehend and score your project correctly. Specific Evaluation Criteria is defined in Section V.A.

* What: Explain the goals and objectives for your project. Include information about how the project contributes to greater understanding and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, identify the NOAA B-WET program priority your project supports, and discuss how it supports the NOAA Education Strategic Plan. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

* Why: Describe the need for your project, including a description of any state, regional, or national initiatives that the project supports. Cite timely studies or sources, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

* Who: Identify the target audience, and give a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served. Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience, including anything that makes your target audience unique, and alignment with state standards. Be sure to include how many students and/or teachers are involved in your project. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

* How: Outline your objectives and a plan of action of how the proposed objectives will be accomplished. If multi-year, provide deliverables for each year. Detail how the project meets or supports the definition of the meaningful watershed educational experience as defined in this funding opportunity and what NOAA products, services, or staff will be used in program delivery. This section addresses technical merit of the proposal. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.2 (Technical merit).

(iii) Sustainability: Discuss a plan for sustainability of project beyond NOAA funding.

Explain why other funding sources, including school and/or school division, cannot fund all of the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that have been sought for the project and the status of those requests. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.4 (Project Costs).

(iv) Outreach and Education: Projects should include significant external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages students and/or teachers to share their knowledge with peers, their school, and their local community. This can include presentation of project design and evaluation at conferences or media outreach about the program, but should also include sharing with other students, teachers, administrators, and the community that advances the goal of environmental stewardship. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.5 (Outreach and Education).

(v) Project Evaluation: Evaluation here is defined as the systematic collection and documentation of information about your project's outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, guide judgments about its impact, and/or inform decisions about future programming or funding. In this section, you must explain your plans for meeting the goals and objectives of your project and for tracking and measuring progress on your outputs and your short-term outcomes. If your medium- and long-term outcomes can also be measured within the project period, explain your plans for that evaluation as well. Evaluation plans may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include, for example, evaluation tools, observation, or outside consultation. No more than 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

If funded by NOAA, grant recipients must be willing to report evaluation results to NOAA.

For detailed information on how to create an evaluation plan visit

http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/b-wet-evaluation.html. In addition, grantees will be required to participate in a programmatic B-WET evaluation as a condition of funding.

(b) APPENDICES (not included in page limit):

(i) Budget Justification: Provide a detailed spreadsheet with narrative to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs). If applying for multiple years of funding, the budget should be broken down for each year requested. Applicants are encouraged to use the B-WET budget template found at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/applying-for-a-grant.html. The budget justification submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on required SF- 424 and SF-424A forms. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.4 (Project Costs).

For Maryland applicants: Specify how much funding has been requested from the

Chesapeake Bay Trust Environmental Education Grants Program to support the project, if such funding has been requested.

Applicants requesting indirect costs should provide a current approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and/or an acknowledgement letter from cognizant agency in which the recipient submitted a proposed rate.

For multi-year projects: Ensure that there is a detailed budget narrative detailing the budget requested for each year matching each SF-424A form.

(ii) Timeline: Include a project schedule that indicates when each action, event, milestone, product development, and evaluation will occur. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

(iii) Logic Model: Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific outputs and outcomes. Provide a logic model that displays these expected outputs and outcomes. A basic logic model and instructions are available at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/b-wet-evaluation.html. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

(iv) Technical Experience and Qualifications: Attach a description of your programmatic capabilities and ability to successfully implement and manage the proposed project including staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project, and your organizational experience and past history in performing tasks similar to the proposed project. Also include a paragraph describing qualifications of each of the key personnel conducting the project. If you send resumes for the key personnel conducting the project, please keep them to a maximum of 3 one-page resumes. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.3 (Overall

Qualifications of Applicants).

(v) Partnership Letters of Commitment: If the applicant organization has partners, such as schools, state agencies, or other organizations, include letters of commitment from partners explaining their role in and/or funding of the proposed project. Do not include letters of endorsement from previous participants, teachers, or others not directly involved in project implementation except letters demonstrating school or school division support and/or direct tie to part of a larger state or regional capacity building effort. Letter must be received

as part of application submission or will not be considered in evaluating proposals. This section will be scored using evaluation criteria V.A.3 (Overall Qualifications of Applicants).

(vi) Results from prior NOAA support: If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received support from NOAA in the past 5 years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided:

* The NOAA award number, amount and period of support;

* The title of the project;

* Summary of the results of the completed work (including # of teachers/students);

* If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent are required for all applications and must be received by 5:00 PM, Eastern Time November 5, 2012. Letters of Intent should be submitted by email to Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov and are time and date stamped by the sender's server. The submitter will receive a response by email from the program office acknowledging receipt of the letter of intent. If you do not receive this response within 72 hours of the deadline, then call Kevin Schabow: 410-295-3145 to confirm that your letter of intent has been received.

Proposals must be received by 5 PM Eastern Time on December 19, 2012. PLEASE NOTE: When submitting through Grants.gov, you will receive 2 emails. An initial email will be sent to confirm your attempt to submit a proposal. This is NOT a confirmation of acceptance of your application. It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application and send you a second email. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted

by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery, and must be received (not postmarked) by 5 PM on December 19, 2012.

Informational webinars will be held on October 10, 2012 at 10:00 AM and October 12, 2012 at 1:00 PM. To register for these webinars, please visit http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/b-wet-workshops.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Cost Rates

Regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which the Department of Commerce will reimburse the recipient shall be the lesser of the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award, or the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by an oversight or cognizant Federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date. However, the Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs for this Program. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount above the 25 percent level as cost sharing. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

2. Allowable Costs

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations"; A-21, "Cost Principles for Education Institutions"; and A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments." Generally, costs that are

allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable."

F. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times above to help

ensure your letter of intent and application are received on time

Additional information about Grants.gov submissions:

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through http://www.grants.gov.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education & Training Program (B-WET) at http://www.grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site as well as the hours of operation. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

" To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a DUNS number and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). You should allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

" After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number.

" NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date.

Address to submit hard copy proposals:

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that

prohibit submission, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery and must be received (not postmarked) by 5 PM on December 19, 2012. Hard copies should be addressed to: Kevin Schabow; NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office;410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A; Annapolis, Maryland 21403. Facsimile transmissions and e-mail submission of proposals will not be accepted.

Address to submit letters of intent:

Letters of intent must be submitted by email to Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov. If applicant does not have Internet access, a hard copy of the letter will be accepted and should be delivered to: Kevin Schabow, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, 410 Severn Ave, Suite 107A; Annapolis, Maryland, 21403.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (15 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the B-WET Program this may include the following questions: Does the applicant demonstrate a need for the project? Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the target community? Does the effort align with state, regional, or national environmental education or STEM initiatives? What is the likelihood that the proposed environmental activities will increase student, teacher, and/or participant stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay watershed? Does the project support

the NOAA Education Strategic Plan and the Mid Atlantic Elementary and Secondary Environmental Literacy Strategy?

For Urban STEM Model Replication only: Does the program have a focus on developing student leadership in STEM? Does the program outline a pathway for students towards science and conservation careers?

2. Technical merit (50 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the BWET Program this may include the following questions: Is the project hands-on for the students, teachers, and/or participants? Is the project part of a sustained activity (e.g. preparation, outdoor action, and reflection for students or meaningful, sustained professional development activities for teachers)? Is the project design investigative (use equipment, take measurements, and make observations to reach conclusions) or project oriented (restoration, monitoring, protection)? Is the project fully integrated into the classroom (e.g. does this project provide a meaningful way for teachers to meet state standards of learning in science and other disciplines) or teach/support methods to integrate the meaningful bay experience into the classroom in an integrated manner? Is the project part of the division curriculum or are the applicants attempting to create division curriculum in cooperation with the schools to fill a recognized gap? Does the applicant utilize NOAA staff, products, or services in the delivery of this project? Are the objectives defined in the proposal focused on the stated outcome(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the logic model show good understanding of desired outputs and outcomes for the project? Does the applicant provide an effective evaluation strategy to determine if project objectives and outcomes are being met?

For Systemic MWEE Implementation only: Does the project meaningfully combine Teacher Professional Development with long-term classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for their Students.

For capacity building proposals scoring criteria will focus on whether or not the project advances the objectives as outlined in the questions above and will specifically ask: Will the proposed work increase the quantity and/or enhance the quality of Meaningful Watershed

Educational Experiences? Will the scope of work lead to broader MWEE implementation (greater than an individual school district or division?

For Urban STEM Model Replication scoring criteria will focus on whether the model advances the goals and objectives listed above for a specific urban community. Additional criteria for this priority are: Does the model meaningfully integrate environmental topics across STEM disciplines? Is the model comprehensive, allowing for a suite of experiences for youth of different ages and abilities?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the B-WET Program this may include the following questions: Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the target audience? Does the applicant document past collaborations with in depth understanding of schools or school systems? Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Does the proposal include partnerships (not just sub-contracting or financing of project)? Are the partnerships working relationships with all entities meaningfully contributing to the project? Are there letters of support from all partners necessary to carry out the project? Does the applicant partner with a school division or school system, individual schools, or teachers? Are there letters from the participating school divisions or school systems, individual schools, or teachers?

For Urban STEM Model Expansion only: Does the applicant demonstrate an ability to serve underserved and underrepresented groups? Does the applicant demonstrate a strong partnership with the organization whose model is being piloted, including details of that organization's involvement in this expansion (if applicable)?

4. Project costs (20 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the B-WET Program this may include the following questions: Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request? Is the budget request reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represent a good return on investment? Is a significant percentage of the budget directly

related to bringing students and/or teachers in contact with the environment? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in the implementation of the proposed project? Does the budget adequately detail the amount of time each individual will spend on the project; is this a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project? Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to leverage other resources? Is the nature of the cost share cash or in-kind; if it is in-kind are all contributions reflected accurately? Does the applicant demonstrate that the project is sustainable after NOAA funding? Is the proposed budget suitable to the geographic area?

For Urban STEM Model Expansion only: Does the budget include funds to support the work of the originating organization (if applicable). Does the applicant demonstrate the capacity and intent to develop and implement a long term program?

5. Outreach and education (5 points)

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. For the B-WET Program this may include the following question: Does the project involve significant external sharing and communication?

For Urban STEM Model Expansion only: Does the applicant demonstrate strong community engagement?

B. Review and Selection Process

Upon receipt of a completed application by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Minimum requirements, among other elements, include all of the following:

- Applicant is eligible to apply;

- Letter of intent was received on time;

- Application was received on time;

- All required elements of the application are present and follow format guidance;

- Requested budget is no less than $25,000 and no more than $200,000 annually, and;

- Project duration is 1 to 3 years.

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the Program office to provide feedback about the project. Any feedback will be sent to the party submitting the letter of intent by November 16, 2012. This notification will be sent via an email from Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov. If you do not hear from the Program office by November 16, 2012, you may assume that no feedback will be given and you should proceed with preparing an application

All applications that meet the eligibility and minimum requirements will be evaluated and scored by one or more panels of independent reviewers. Up to four separate review panels may be held depending on number, geography, and type of applications received. Reviewers may be Federal or non-Federal experts, each having expertise in the subject matter and/or geography of the applications under review. The reviewers will score each application using the evaluation criteria and relative weights provided above. The individual review ratings shall be averaged for each application to establish rank order. Scores from separate panels will not be combined to establish an overall rank order. No consensus advice will be given by the review panels.

B-WET Chesapeake Program Officers will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review panels. The B-WET Chesapeake Program Manager will make his/her recommendations for funding based on rank order of each panel and the selection factors listed below to the Selecting Official for final funding decisions.

C. Selection Factors

The B-WET Chesapeake Coordinator may, in consultation with NCBO staff, review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel and make recommendations to the Selecting Official. The average rank order from the review panel will be the primary consideration for the Selection Official in deciding which of the new proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the recommendations of the review panel, and recommendations of the B-WET Chesapeake Coordinator. The Selecting Official

shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the following factors:

1. Availability of funding

2. Balance/distribution of funds

" Geographically

" By type of institutions

" By type of partners

" By research areas

" By project types

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

4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in section I.A. and B.

5. Applicant's prior award performance

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups

Projects considered for continuation will be evaluated by the Director of the NCBO, in consultation with the B-WET Chesapeake Coordinator and other NCBO staff, to determine whether to be continued for funding based upon the advice of the review panel. If there has been satisfactory prior award performance, projects considered for continuation may take priority over new proposals.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the three months following the date given in this announcement that the full proposals are due to NCBO and preliminary notification will occur in February 2013. No date prior to September 1, 2013 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals. If a start date prior to September 1, 2013 is desired please contact the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (see agency contact in Section VII).

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be issued through postal mail to the Authorizing Official of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation and the applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of 12 months, then destroyed.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010),

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW: Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

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://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm. 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 of 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. The 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.

THE 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 February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696), are applicable to this solicitation.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT: This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the respective control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040, 0348-0046, and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection

of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13132 (FEDERALISM): It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT/REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT: Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements for the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer (NOAA Grants Management Division). Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer (Chesapeake Bay B-WET Coordinator or their designate). Electronic submission of performance reports is preferred. All reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration.

"The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report

to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

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

1. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the B-WET Chesapeake website for further information at: http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bwet, or contact Kevin Schabow, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A, Annapolis, MD 21403, or by phone at 410-295-3145, or fax to 410-267-5666, or via internet at Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information