

**The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
National Nonprofit Organization Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Grant
Program**

All entities wishing to do business with the federal government must have a unique entity identifier (UEI). The UEI number is issued by the System for Award Management (SAM).

SAM.gov registration information can be found at: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

Grants.gov registration information can be found at:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.

Additional UEI Update Information can be found on Grants.gov:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/planned-uei-updates.html>

A. Program Description

1. Issued By

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), United States Coast Guard (USCG),
Office of Auxiliary & Boating Safety, Boating Safety Division

2. Assistance Listings Number

97.012

3. Assistance Listings Title

Boating Safety Financial Assistance

4. Funding Opportunity Title

National Nonprofit Organization Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Grant Program

5. Funding Opportunity Number

DHS-USCG-2023-001

6. Authorizing Authority for Program

46 U.S.C. §§ 13101-13110

7. Appropriation Authority for Program

Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act, Chp. 658, § 4, 64 Stat. 432, as amended (classified to 16 U.S.C. § 777c); Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, Pub. L. No. 97-424, § 531(a), 96 Stat. 2187-2191 (1983), as amended (classified to 26 U.S.C. § 9503)

8. Announcement Type

Initial

9. Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities

a. Overview

The mission of the National RBS Program is to ensure the public has a safe, secure, and enjoyable recreational boating experience by implementing programs designed to minimize the loss of life, personal injury, and property damage while cooperating with environmental and national security efforts.

b. Objectives

The strategic plan of the National RBS Program has three initiatives designed to prevent deaths and injuries of recreational boaters. They are:

- 1) **Initiative 1:** Positively Influence Recreational Boater Behavior
- 2) **Initiative 2:** Positively Influence Recreational Boat and Accessory Manufacturers
- 3) **Initiative 3:** Leverage Recreational Boating Data

c. Priorities

The Boating Safety Division will facilitate the execution of the three initiatives via the courses of action (CoA) and activities listed in the strategic plan.

Nonprofits may review the CoAs and activities to understand the intent of each initiative, but **applicants are not required to cite and/or specifically address an individual CoA or activity.**

Nonprofits should use the framework of the strategic plan to contextualize the overall goals of the National RBS Program but **are encouraged to apply for any project that fits one or more of the three initiatives.**

The strategic plan can be found online at: [RBS Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#).

10. Performance Measures

In compliance with DHS and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements, the USCG is introducing new program-wide performance measures to be tracked annually. Successful applicants will be required to report on the following measures:

- 1) Media impressions generated by boating safety outreach grants
- 2) Nationwide life jacket wear rate
- 3) Number of attendees at grant-funded boating safety conferences
- 4) Number of boating engineering standards improved through grant funding
- 5) Number of life jackets utilized at grant-funded life jacket loaner stations
- 6) Number of students and instructors produced from grant-funded boating law enforcement courses

11. Key Changes for the FY 2023 Competition

- a. This competition introduces the new strategic plan for the National RBS Program. Applicants should carefully review the information in **Section A. 9. Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities**.
- b. The USCG updated **Section A. 10. Performance Measures** in compliance with DHS and OMB requirements.
- c. The USCG also updated the corresponding performance measure-related selection criteria in **Section E. 1. a. Programmatic Criteria**. Two previously used criteria were condensed into one updated criterion.
- d. The page length of the Executive Summary has been reduced to half a page or approximately 250 words. Brevity is encouraged so that the successful summaries can be posted to the USCG's website in a timelier manner.
- e. Due to the amount of funding available for new awards, the USCG will be enforcing new competition parameters. Applicants should carefully review the information in **Section D. 11. Other Submission Requirements**.
 - 1) Applicants must apply for a one-year period of performance.
 - 2) Organizations can submit a maximum of four applications.
 - 3) The maximum budget request per application cannot exceed \$250,000.
- f. Please strictly follow the file labeling instructions in **Section D. 11. Other Submission Requirements**.
- g. There are no Areas of Interest for this competition.

B. Federal Award Information

- 1. **Available Funding for the NOFO:** **\$2,046,905**
- 2. **Maximum Award Amount:** **\$250,000**
Applicants **may not** request more than \$250,000 per application. Applications that exceed \$250,000 will not be reviewed.
- 3. **Period of Performance:** **12 months**
Extensions are permitted. Please refer to **Section H. 1. Period of Performance Extensions**.
- 4. **Projected Period of Performance Start Date:** **10/01/2023**
- 5. **Projected Period of Performance End Date:** **09/30/2024**

6. **Funding Instrument Type:** **Cooperative Agreement**

A cooperative agreement is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the federal awarding agency and the non-federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the federal award. The USCG will work closely with recipients throughout the duration of the award to ensure that approved activities are conducted in accordance with program statute and federal regulations, requested costs are allowable and allocable, and deliverables are developed or enhanced with direct input and review by USCG staff. The USCG and recipient will also develop definitions of substantial involvement tailored to the awarded activities that will be defined in the recipient's *Coast Guard Terms & Conditions*.

The USCG can halt an activity immediately if the detailed performance specifications or requirements, as determined by the agreed upon terms and conditions of the award agreement, are not met. USCG may require the review and approval of proposed tasks, activities, and deliverables prior to the recipient's implementation or dissemination.

USCG staff also play a direct role in the post-award negotiation process. Please see **Section. F. 2. Grant Award Negotiations** for more information.

C. Eligibility Information

1. **Eligible Applicants**

Nonprofit with 501(c)(3) IRS Status (Other than Institution of Higher Education)

2. **Applicant Eligibility Criteria**

46 U.S.C. § 13104 authorizes federal financial assistance for "national boating safety activities of national nonprofit public service organizations." The USCG has developed the following eligibility criteria based on federal law and regulations, legal rulings and interpretations, and guidance from other federal agencies. Organizations do not need to be boating related.

- a. Applicants must be a nongovernmental organization.
- b. Applicants must be designated as a nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in accordance with 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).
Applicants are required to submit a copy of their letter from the IRS specifying the organization's status.
- c. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to provide recreational boating safety services that are national-in-scope. National-in-scope means the organization must demonstrate the ability to provide recreational boating safety services in all regions; is currently providing recreational boating services in all regions; or proposes a specific plan and timeline to partner and/or contract with other national, state, and/or local organizations across all regions to provide recreational boating safety services. A

national membership base does not suffice. For more information regions, please see **Appendix A: Grant Regional Map.**

- d. Applicants must demonstrate that one of their primary functions is to provide services to the public.

Nonprofit organizations that are associated with profit-making or taxable organizations are eligible for grants if they meet all the eligibility requirements.

3. **Ineligible Organizations**

The following organizations are ineligible for funding: (1) colleges and universities; (2) hospitals; (3) governments or governmental organizations (including city, county, state, etc.); (4) churches; (5) municipalities; (6) local units of national organizations; (7) fraternal, lobbying, or religious organizations; and (8) organizations that are unable operate on a national level.

4. **Contracting with Ineligible Organizations**

Eligible applicants may contract with ineligible organizations to provide direct services to the proposed project. In the project narrative, the applicant must:

- 1) indicate that it will maintain all project records, serve as the primary point of contact, and maintain funding accountability; and
- 2) explicitly state which activities will be conducted by the contracted entity.

5. **Cost Share or Match**

None.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. **Key Dates and Times**

- a. **Application Start Date:** **03/20/2023**
- b. **Application Submission Deadline:** **05/22/2023 at 11:59:59 PM EST**
All applications must be received by the established deadline.
- c. **Anticipated Funding Selection:** **08/31/2023**
- d. **Anticipated Award Date:** **No later than 09/30/2023**

2. **Agreeing to Terms and Conditions of the Award**

By submitting an application, applicants agree to comply with the requirements of this NOFO and the terms and conditions of the award, should they receive an award.

3. **Address to Request Application Package**

Application forms and instructions are available at Grants.gov. To access these materials, go to <http://www.grants.gov>.

Applications will be processed through the Grants.gov portal.

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

Each applicant, unless they have a valid exception under 2 C.F.R. § 25.110, must:

- 1) Be registered in SAM.Gov before application submission.
- 2) Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application.
- 3) Continue to always maintain an active SAM registration with current information during the Federal Award process.

5. Steps Required to Submit an Application, UEI, and SAM

To apply for an award under this program, all applicants must:

- a. Have an account with <https://login.gov/>
- b. Register for, update, or verify their SAM account and ensure the account is active and Employer ID Number (EIN) before submitting the application.
- c. Create a Grants.gov account.
- d. Add a profile to a Grants.gov account.
- e. Establish an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) in Grants.gov.
 - 1) The name listed as the AOR should be the person within your organization who has delegated signing authority. This person will be the primary contact on all official correspondence, including competition updates, notifications, and award documents. Please be sure to identify the correct person at the time of application.
- f. Submit application in Grants.gov.
- g. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information, including information on a recipient's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well on all predecessors that have been awarded a federal contract or grant within the last 3 years, if applicable, at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

Applicants are advised that DHS may not make a federal award until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements. Therefore, an applicant's SAM registration must be active not only at the time of application, but also during the application review period and when DHS is ready to make a federal award. Further, as noted above, an applicant's or recipient's SAM registration must remain active for the duration of an active federal award. If an applicant's SAM registration is expired at the time of application, expires during application review, or expires any other time before award, DHS 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.

The Standard Language for Using Grants.gov to Apply is provided to aid in fulfilling these requirements (if applicable), based off of

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/grantors/grantor-standard-language.html>.

6. Electronic Delivery

DHS is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. DHS encourages or requires applicants to submit their applications online through Grants.gov, depending on the

funding opportunity. For this funding opportunity, the USCG requires applicants to submit applications through Grants.gov.

7. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

- a. **Instructions:** Registering in Grants.gov is a multi-step process. Read the instructions below about registering to apply for DHS funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organizations must have a UEI Number with an active SAM registration, and Grants.gov account to apply for grants. If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this grant funding opportunity, then you may begin with step 3, Create a Grants.gov account, listed below.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entity's ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Complete organization instructions can be found on Grants.gov here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

- 1) **Register with SAM:** All organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM.gov. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Organizations will be issued a UEI number with the completed SAM registration.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>.

- 2) **Create a Grants.gov Account:** The next step is to register an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions or refer to the detailed instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>.
- 3) **Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account:** A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all of

your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI Number for the organization in the UEI field while adding a profile.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html>.

- 4) **EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles:** After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the organization applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>.

- 5) **Track Role Status:** To track your role request, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>.
- 6) **Electronic Signature:** When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

8. How to Submit an Application to DHS via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NOFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities using Workspace, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

- a. **Create a Workspace:** Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- b. **Complete a Workspace:** Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using

Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

- c. **Adobe Reader:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

- d. **Mandatory Fields in Forms:** In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.
- e. **Complete SF-424 Fields First:** The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- f. **Submit a Workspace:** An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
- g. **Track a Workspace Submission:** After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant to which you are applying.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist DHS with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

9. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

- a. **Online Submission.** All applications must be received by **05/22/2023 at 11:59:59 PM EST**. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. This applicant with the AOR role will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When DHS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by DHS.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

10. Content and Form of Application Submission

- a. **Format:** Applications should be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt. black font, and one-inch margins.
- b. **Required Narratives with Page Limits**
The following guidance and page limits apply to specific, required components of the application. Please follow the instructions carefully.

The USCG screens all application materials for compliance with the page limits, as well as the instructions provided in **Section D. 11. Other Submission Requirements**. The USCG will remove any text over the page limit and any document that is not specifically required by this NOFO. **Reviewers will not read, consider, or be provided with any text or document submitted beyond what is allowed.**

1) Executive Summary: Half a page (appx. 250 words)

Applicants must include a **succinct** overview of the proposed project and activities. It should include what the applicant plans to accomplish, a summary of the proposed activities and deliverables, and a brief description of the potential, broader impact of the grant's successful completion.

Reviewers will not assess the summary against the selection criteria but use it as an introduction to the proposal. If the application is successful, the USCG will post the summary, pending any necessary revisions or updates, to its public website.

Applicants **should NOT** include:

- a) internal or technical jargon
- b) references to past grants or the strategic plan
- c) organizational information or prior history
- d) charts, graphs, or graphics.

2) Organization Description: One page

Applicants must provide a clear and concise description of the organization, including its knowledge, background, capacity, and technical experience to complete the proposed activities. If applicable, demonstrate the organization's previous experience with or working in recreational boating safety.

This one-page description should be the primary location for reviewers to review and assess your organization's ability to complete the proposed project. Please be sure to substantiate this experience vis-à-vis the resumes included elsewhere in this application and to cite this experience, as necessary but not to the point of redundancy, within the program narrative.

3) Program Timeline: Up to two pages

Applicants must submit a timeline that clearly explains the duration of the one-year proposal. In lieu of writing the timeline in the program narrative, applicants should use the following table to itemize and explain each milestone of the proposed project and its related tasks. The timeline should provide a clear, chronological description that supports and coincides with the program narrative.

Applicants may use as many rows and as much text per row, as needed, to best describe the proposed activities. Applicants are encouraged to consider **Section E. 1. a. Programmatic Criteria** when drafting the timeline.

#	Task	Timeframe	Additional Information
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

4) **Program Narrative: 10 pages**

Applicants are encouraged to write their program narrative to address each of the published selection criteria in **Section E. 1. a. Programmatic Criteria**.

Applicants should review the criteria beforehand and address each one in the order that they are listed.

Applicants should clearly articulate their goals, objectives, and proposed deliverables, and how these will be achieved. The narrative should demonstrate how the proposed activities address one or more of the initiatives of the strategic plan, and how the successful completion of the projects serves the greater public.

Applicants should also:

- a) use short and concise project titles
- b) clearly state at the beginning of the narrative which initiative(s) of the strategic plan it intends to address
- c) provide as much specificity as possible when describing key tasks, itemizing budget expenses, and explaining deliverables
- d) include cross-references to relevant information to avoid redundancies and to maximize page space.

Applicants **should NOT** include:

- a) their organization's name or the year in their project title
- b) technical jargon, short-hand, or abbreviations
- c) active hyperlinks to external resources that are not direct citations of a referenced source
 - i. e.g. websites containing previous work, examples of online videos, etc.
 - ii. providing "see more here" hyperlinks to external information does not align with the intention of a page limit
- d) citations that exceed the 10-page limit
 - i. if using footnotes or end notes, ensure that they are counted towards the overall page count

b. **Required Narratives without Page Limits**

The following documents are required but are not subjected to page limits.

1) **Budget**

Applicants must submit a separate, detailed, Excel-based budget using **Appendix C. Budget Template**. Applicants must download the Excel file separately from the funding opportunity in Grants.gov and follow the instructions in **Appendix B. Budget & Budget Narrative Instructions**.

2) **Budget Narrative**

The budget narrative should describe, explain, and justify to the fullest extent possible, in the same order and in complete sentences, the itemized costs for the proposed activities identified in the budget. Reviewers will use this as a tool to assess the necessity and cost reasonableness for each line item. Applicants should

use the budget narrative to expand upon what you want to request, for how much, and for what purpose. It should not be used as an “extension” of the project narrative. Applicants must follow the instructions in **Appendix B. Budget & Budget Narrative Instructions**.

c. **Other Required Documents:**

- 1) 501 (c)(3) letter from the IRS designating the applicant’s nonprofit status
- 2) Verification of a federally approved accounting system
- 3) A copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
- 4) A Board of Directors roster that outlines duties, responsibilities, etc.
- 5) Resumes of principal participant(s), if applicable:
 - a) A principal participant is the primary individual(s) responsible for the preparation, conduct, and administration of the grant, and serves as the lead for the project.
- 6) Travel policy
 - a) Ensure that all travel requests and expenses are allowable and consistent with this policy.
- 7) Procurement policies
 - a) Include the procurement policies for your organization. Policies should be consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.317-200.327 Procurement Standards.

11. Other Submission Requirements

Organizations that do not follow these parameters may have their application(s) disqualified. We enforce these rules to ensure a fair and equitable competition for all applicants regardless of the type of project proposed.

- a. Applicants must apply for a **one-year** period of performance.
- b. Organizations can submit a **maximum** of four applications.
- c. The maximum budget request **per application** cannot exceed \$250,000. **Applications that exceed \$250,000 will not be reviewed.**
- d. Do not submit any additional documents that are not explicitly requested in this NOFO. **These documents will not be provided to the reviewers.** This includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1) bibliographies, footnotes, or end notes that extend beyond the 10-page narrative
 - 2) contractual plans or proposals unless the procurement process is complete at the time of application
 - 3) letters of support
 - 4) examples of past work
 - 5) presentation materials
 - 6) survey data
 - 7) course lists

e. **Grants.gov PDF Submission Instructions**

Please review and follow these instructions carefully. File name length can affect our ability to download your application from Grants.gov and to manage the documents on our internal servers. Standardized file names also allow us to better process your submissions for the application review process.

- 1) All required documents should be combined into two primary, but separate PDFs: ***Narratives*** and ***Additional Documents***.
 - a) If you do not have the ability to combine PDFs, label each file individually with a very simple description.
 - b) **DO NOT INCLUDE your organization's name, project title, or the year in the file names.**
- 2) The primary PDFs should be combined in the following order:
 - a) ***Narratives***:
 - i. Executive Summary
 - ii. Organization Description
 - iii. Timeline
 - iv. Project Narrative
 - v. Budget: Please follow the instructions in **Appendix B. Budget & Budget Narrative Instructions** on how to save or print-to-PDF your Excel spreadsheet.
 - vi. Budget Narrative
 - b) ***Additional Documents*** (as applicable):
 - i. 501 (c)(3) letter from the IRS
 - ii. Verification of a federally approved accounting system
 - iii. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
 - iv. Board of Directors roster
 - v. Resumes of principal participant(s)
 - vi. Travel policy
 - vii. Procurement policies

12. Funding Restrictions and Allowable Costs

- a. All expenditures under this program must be for allowable recreational boating safety costs.
- b. The USCG permits costs related to outreach, marketing, and year-round safe boating campaigns. Specific approval of these activities will be given during the grant negotiation period for successful applications. Activities may include, but are not limited to, advertising, marketing, and/or outreach campaigns, public service announcements, educational videos, and other media.
- c. Applicants must be aware of the prohibitions described in section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 2019 NDAA),

Pub. L. No. 115-232 (2018) and 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.216, 200.327, 200.471, and Appendix II to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

13. Allowable Costs

a. Pre-Award Costs

Pre-award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of the federal award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the federal award where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the federal award and only with the written approval of the federal awarding agency. The USCG provides written approval of pre-award costs in its terms and conditions.

b. Indirect Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs

Nonprofit organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as a non-federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time.

Any non-federal entity that has a current federally negotiated indirect cost rate may apply for a one-time extension of the rates in that agreement for a period of up to four years. This extension will be subject to the review and approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs. If an extension is granted the non-federal entity may not request a rate review until the extension period ends. At the end of the four-year extension, the non-federal entity must re-apply to negotiate a rate. Subsequent one-time extensions (up to four years) are permitted if a renegotiation is completed between each extension request.

E. Application Review Information

1. Application Evaluation Criteria

a. Programmatic Criteria

This section includes the criteria that reviewers will use to assess each application. Applicants should draft the narrative in the order in which the questions appear to ensure each one is addressed.

Please remember that the program narrative cannot exceed 10 pages. Reviewers will not be given any text that exceeds the page limit. Also note that this section includes the points for each question, indicating its weight.

- 1) **Does the applicant propose a project that addresses one of the three initiatives in the strategic plan?**
 - a) **If yes:** Does the applicant effectively demonstrate how its proposed project will address the initiative? **(20 pts)**
 - b) **If no:** Does the applicant identify an area of need for the recreational boating safety community and effectively demonstrate an ability to complete the proposed project? **(20 pts)**

All applications are eligible to receive up to 20 points.

- a) *If yes: Applicants should clearly identify the targeted initiative and propose relevant activities.*
 - b) *If no: Applicants should clearly identify the need it plans to address and substantiate its importance, relevance, and potential contribution to the recreational boating safety community*
- 2) **Does the applicant clearly define a project timeline and milestones? (10 pts)**

*Applicants should demonstrate that the timeline for the proposed project is reasonable and that the milestones are achievable. Applicants should ensure that incremental goals and/or milestones are clearly planned and identified, as well as any projects that may be replicated during the period of performance (e.g. delivering multiple training sessions of the same course). It is important to show the progression of the project start to finish. Applicants should follow the instructions in **Section D. 10. b. 3. Program Timeline.***
- 3) **Are the proposed activities measurable and consistent with program requirements? (10 pts)**

*Applicants that meet the performance measures specified in **Section A. 10. Performance Measures** should propose a methodology to effectively collect and report out on data collected through the grant process. Applicants that do not meet the measures should explain how their program can be measured qualitatively and quantitatively and demonstrate that these measures are both realistic and achievable.*
- 4) **Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge and experience in Recreational Boating Safety? (10 pts)**

Applicants should clearly explain how the organization and its staff have the knowledge, experience, and background to operate an RBS program successfully. This information should be captured in the one-page Organization Description and substantiated vis-à-vis staff resumes and the program narrative.
- 5) **Does the applicant have the organizational capacity and technical experience to complete the proposed project? (20 pts)**

If the technical experience is not “in-house,” applicants should have a plan in place to acquire it and indicate the associated costs.

- 6) **Does the applicant describe how the proposed project is, or will be, national-in-scope? (10 pts)**
*Applicants should clearly explain how their proposed project qualifies as national-in-scope. Applicants should review the program-specific definitions of national-in-scope identified in **Section C. 2. Applicant Eligibility Criteria**.*
- 7) **How effective are the applicant's proposed methods of outreach and/or dissemination for its products and/or deliverables? (10 pts)**
Applicants should indicate the associated costs.
- 8) **Do the budget and budget narrative align with the proposed project? (10 pts)**
Please ensure that the budget and budget narrative matches and/or is tailored to the proposed project, especially if your organization is submitting more than one application. Additionally, please use consistent terminology when describing items in the narrative, budget, and budget narrative, aligning the order in which they appear.
- 9) **Are the budget line items necessary and/or reasonable? (10 pts)**
*Reviewers will assess the necessity and cost reasonableness of each budget line. Use the budget narrative to describe, explain, and justify the associated costs of the project. Please see **Appendix B: Budget & Budget Narrative Instructions** for additional guidance.*
- 10) **Are the proposed administrative costs reasonable? (10 pts)**
Reviewers will assess if the costs associated with managing and executing the proposed activities are cost-effective as they relate to the deliverables. For example, reviewers will consider the level of effort to monitor a contract or create a deliverable against the amount of money paid to the person doing it. Reviewers will draw from their subject matter expertise to assess the proposed costs, and applicants should provide a clear explanation and justification for them in their budget narratives.

b. Financial Integrity Criteria

Prior to making a federal award, the USCG is required by the Payment Integrity Act of 2019, 41 U.S.C. § 2313 – Database for federal agency contract and grant officers and suspension and debarment officials, and 2 C.F.R. § 200.206 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant:

- 1) Financial stability.
- 2) Quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards.
- 3) History of performance in managing federal award.
- 4) Reports and findings from audits.
- 5) Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

c. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review

Prior to making a federal award where the anticipated total federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$250,000 (see Section 805 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-91, OMB Memorandum M-18-18 at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/M-18-18.pdf>):

- 1) The USCG is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM, which is currently the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System](#) (FAPIIS) and is accessible through the sam.gov website.
- 2) An applicant, at its option, may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered.
- 3) The USCG will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.206.

2. Review and Selection Process

Applications are subjected to a Merit Review performed by Subject Matter Experts (reviewers). Reviewers assess the applications for technical merit, personnel qualifications, and the degree to which a proposal offers potential value and measurements to program goals as stated in this NOFO. Any persons who assess and score the nonprofit organization grant applications are required to complete a DHS Conflict of Interest Form.

Upon completion of the review, BSX-2 staff logs the scores and prepares a ranking list, along with the recommended funding levels from the reviewers, for discussion and consideration. All recommendations are presented to the BSX-2 Branch and Division Chiefs for their review. The Office Chief then reviews and presents a recommendation to the Director of Inspections and Compliance for their review and ultimate approval. The Director of Inspections and Compliance has the authority to approve the awards. Once the Director of Inspections and Compliance determines the final funding levels, an approval memo is generated, co-signed, and kept as part of the official program file.

3. Clarification Period

During the application review and assessment process, reviewers will have a one-week period to ask applicants clarifying questions about the proposals. The Nonprofit Coordinator will notify the applicants in advance of the scheduled clarification period so that they can prepare accordingly. The Nonprofit Coordinator will serve as an intermediary between the applicants and the reviewers. Applicants must respond within a specific amount of time and can only provide responses directly to the question(s). The Nonprofit Coordinator will provide instructions to the applicants once the clarification period is scheduled.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Notice of Award

Before accepting the award, the AOR and recipient should carefully read the award package. The award package includes instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under federal awards.

Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any special terms and conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

All applicants will be notified of their funding status. Successful applicants will receive a letter indicating the funded proposal(s), award amount(s), and the assigned Grant Technical Managers (GTMs). The letter will also include important information regarding grant award negotiations and participation in the annual, mandatory webinar.

2. Grant Award Negotiations

After successful applicants receive their funding notifications, the assigned GTMs will work with recipients to identify areas of the executive summary, narratives, and/or budget that may require revision.

Revisions may be required if:

- 1) the applicant was not awarded the amount of funding for which they applied
- 2) there are activities and/or costs that are not allowable or approved
- 3) adjustments need to be made to the project timeline.

Pending the results of the negotiations, recipients must submit the appropriate revised documents to the USCG staff for review and approval. The USCG staff may provide guidance and/or stipulations that help inform the recipient's revisions. Staff will also draft a summary of their role(s) and responsibilities that define the USCG's substantial involvement in the management of the cooperative agreement. After review and mutual acceptance of the modified document(s), the award agreement and terms and conditions will be sent to the recipient for signature.

The assigned GTM and Grants Management Specialist will remain the recipient's primary points of contact for the duration of the project and should:

- 1) provide technical assistance as required
- 2) review and approve the recipient's progress reports and requests for payments
- 3) provide required federal forms and explain how to fill them out
- 4) act as liaison between the recipient and any other USCG staff.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for DHS grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, which are available online at: [DHS Standard Terms and Conditions](#).

The applicable DHS Standard Terms and Conditions will be those in effect at the time the award was made unless the application is for a continuation award. In that event, the

terms and conditions in effect at the time the original award was made will generally apply. What terms and conditions will apply for the award will be clearly stated in the award package at the time of award.

3. Reporting

a. Federal Financial Reporting Requirements

- 1) The Federal Financial Report (FFR) form is available online at: [SF-425 OMB #4040-0014](#)
- 2) The financial reporting schedule for this program is **semi-annual**:
 - a) Through Quarter 1: due **January 30, 2024**
 - b) Through Quarter 3: due **July 30, 2024**

b. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements

- 1) Recipients are required to submit quarterly performance reports due no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter. The report should be a one to two-page narrative summarizing key tasks, notable accomplishments, challenges, and/or adjustments made during the previous quarter.
- 2) Progress reports **should not** include future work plans or anticipated activities, activities that did not happen during the reporting period, or activities that were not funded by the grant.
- 3) The performance reporting schedule for this program is **quarterly**:
 - a) Quarter 1: Oct 1 – Dec 31st, due **January 30, 2024**
 - b) Quarter 2: Jan 1 – Mar 31st, due **April 30, 2024**
 - c) Quarter 3: Apr 1 – Jun 30th, due **July 30, 2024**
 - d) Quarter 4: Jul 1 – Sept 30th, due **October 30, 2024**

c. Closeout Reporting Requirements

Within 120 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, recipients must submit the following:

- 1) the final request for payment, if applicable
- 2) the final FFR (SF-425)
- 3) the final progress report detailing all accomplishments
- 4) a 508-compliant qualitative narrative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance to be posted on the Boating Safety Division's website; and
- 5) Other documents required by this NOFO, terms and conditions of the award, or other USCG guidance.

After these reports have been reviewed and approved by the USCG, a closeout notice will be completed to close out the grant. The notice will indicate the period of

performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be de-obligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final FFR, unless a longer period applies, such as due to an audit or litigation, for equipment or real property used beyond the period of performance, or due to other circumstances outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.334 Retention requirements for records.

In addition, any recipient that issues subawards to any subrecipient is responsible for closing out those subawards as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.344 Closeout. Recipients acting as pass-through entities must ensure that they complete the closeout of their subawards in time to submit all necessary documentation and information to the USCG during the closeout of their prime grant award.

The recipient is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain as unliquidated on recipient financial records.

4. Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335

This reporting requirement pertains to disclosing information related to government-wide suspension and debarment requirements. Before a recipient enters into a grant award with the USCG, the recipient must notify the USCG if it knows if it or any of the recipient's principals under the award fall under one or more of the four criteria listed at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335:

- 1) are presently excluded or disqualified
- 2) have been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in 2 C.F.R. § 180.800(a) or had a civil judgment rendered against it or any of the recipient's principals for one of those offenses within that time period
- 3) are presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of the offenses listed in 2 C.F.R. § 180.800(a)
- 4) have had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated within the preceding three years for cause or default.

At any time after accepting the award, if the recipient learns that it or any of its principals falls under one or more of the criteria listed at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335, the recipient must provide immediate written notice to the USCG in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 180.350.

5. Monitoring and Oversight

Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.329, the USCG, through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to conduct desk reviews, make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems to review project accomplishments and to provide any required technical assistance. During site visits, the USCG will review recipients' files related to the grant award. As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, grant recipients must permit the USCG, upon reasonable notice, to review grant-related records and to interview the organization's staff and contractors regarding the program. Recipients must respond in a timely and accurate manner to the USCG requests for information relating to the grant program.

6. Program Evaluation

Recipients and subrecipients are encouraged to incorporate program evaluation activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards the outcomes proposed Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) defines evaluation as “an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency.” Evidence Act § 101 (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 311). Credible program evaluation activities are implemented with relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency, and ethics (OMB Circular A-11, Part 6 Section 290).

Evaluation costs are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect), unless prohibited by statute or regulation, and such costs may include the personnel and equipment needed for data infrastructure and expertise in data analysis, performance, and evaluation. (2 C.F.R. § 200).

In addition, recipients are required to participate in a DHS-led evaluation if selected, which may be carried out by a third-party on behalf of the Program Office or DHS. By accepting grant funds, recipients agree to participate in the evaluation, which may include analysis of individuals who benefit from the grant, and provide access to program operating personnel and participants, as specified by the evaluator(s) during the award.

G. DHS Awarding Agency Contact Information

1. Contact and Resource Information

Cynthia Dudzinski: cynthia.m.dudzinski@uscg.mil

H. Other Information

1. Period of Performance Extensions

One-time extensions are allowed. Recipients must request an extension in writing 10 days prior to the end of the period of performance. The USCG staff will review the request, as well as the award’s agreed-upon deliverables, milestones, and timeline, to determine if the request is both appropriate and feasible. The USCG will notify the recipient via email and/or an official notification letter.

2. Program Income

Recipients are encouraged to earn income to defray program costs where appropriate. The USCG authorizes program income per the addition method as defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.307 (e)(2). Program income must be used for allowable and approved grant activities, and it must be expended prior to the end of the project period. Recipients are encouraged to spend program income first before requesting additional grant funds.

3. SAM.gov Registration: Beware Third Party Scammers

There is **NO FEE** to register or maintain your SAM.gov registration.

If you get an email, text, or phone call from a company asking you to contact them right away about your SAM.gov registration, be cautious. If you are asked to pay money to complete or renew your SAM.gov registration, be cautious. **These messages are not from the federal government.** It is **FREE TO REGISTER** in SAM.gov for any entity. You engage third party vendors at your own risk.

Please report these type of messages to the Federal Service Desk (FSD) at <https://fsd.gov/fsd-gov/home.do>. It will be reviewed by General Services Administration (GSA) staff.

4. Appendices

- a. **Grant Regional Map**
- b. **Budget & Budget Narrative Instructions**
- c. **Budget Template:** Applicants must download the Excel file separately from the funding opportunity in Grants.gov.