

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2015 Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2015-2004324

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.473, Coastal Services Center

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 24, 2015. See also Section IV. C and F of this FFO.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to solicit proposals from eligible entities to develop or implement activities that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions. Successful applicants will develop proposals that plan or implement actions that mitigate the impacts of these environmental drivers on overall resilience, including economic and environmental resilience.

Funds will be available to support activities that:

- Identify and address priority data, information, and capacity gaps
- Develop tools, as needed, to inform sound, science-based decisions, which support regional efforts to plan for a resilient ocean and coastal economy
- Acquire and integrate socioeconomic information with physical and biological information to improve the assessment of risk and vulnerability for planning and decision making
- Understand how hazards and changing ocean conditions affect coastal economies, including existing and emerging sectors that depend on the ocean and coasts
- Develop the information and approaches needed for improved risk communication, and the necessary tools, technical assistance and training tailored toward enhanced resilience to weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions
- Evaluate the costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of systems-based development or redevelopment

approaches that incorporate both natural defenses and hard structural solutions

- Support the development of sustainable recovery, redevelopment, and adaptation plans and implement programs and projects that incentivize rebuilding and development approaches which reduce risk and increase resilience

Proposals submitted in response to this announcement shall employ a regional approach that results in improved ability of multiple coastal jurisdictions to prepare for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to adverse events and changing environmental, economic, and social conditions. Proposals should demonstrate coordinated effort of multiple jurisdictions (e.g., states, tribes, territories, counties, municipalities, regional organizations, etc.) and/or state or local managed areas within a specified geographic region and involve the appropriate range of partners and stakeholders to ensure project success.

Collaborative projects that leverage NOAA supported programs, products, partnerships or services and support federal, tribal, state, regional, county or local plans and partnerships are preferred. Also preferred are proposals that leverage other Administration priorities and other federal resilience investments. Eligible funding applicants are: nonprofit organizations; private (for profit) entities; institutions of higher education; and state, territorial, tribal, local governments as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.64, which includes counties, municipalities, and cities; and regional organizations (as defined in this announcement).

Applicants must conduct projects benefiting coastal communities within one or more of the following U.S. states and territories: Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands (US), Washington, and Wisconsin. This competition is one of two competitions being administered by NOAA to build coastal resilience. The companion competition, Coastal Ecosystem Resilience Grants, is being administered by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to improve the resiliency of ocean and coastal ecosystems.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objectives of the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants program, administered by NOAA's National Ocean Service, are to support actions that build resilience of U.S. communities and existing and emerging economic sectors, and to do so using regional approaches. In addition, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is administering a complementary FY2015 Coastal Ecosystem Resilience Grants program to support implementation of actions that build resilience of U.S. coastal and ocean ecosystems. Together, these companion programs are intended to address increasing risk associated with extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions by supporting activities that are critical to our nation's economy and NOAA's mission to safeguard people and infrastructure, facilitate commerce, and conserve and restore coastal and marine resources.

Our nation's economy is inextricably linked to the health and productivity of our coasts. Revenue from maritime commerce, commercial fishing, aquaculture and tourism all contribute to diverse and healthy coastal economies. Coastal counties contribute \$6.6 trillion, or just under half of the country's gross domestic product, to the U.S. economy and are home to almost 40 percent of the U.S. population. Extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions all have significant impacts on coastal communities and our national economy. Because of their location within low-lying areas, coastal infrastructure (e.g. roads, drainage systems, treatment systems, ports, small harbors, parks, docks, marinas, piers, and other public infrastructure) and businesses are highly vulnerable and particularly susceptible. Between 2010 and 2014, NOAA documented 41 natural disasters in the United States caused by floods, severe storms, and tropical cyclones with losses exceeding \$1 billion (CPI-Adjusted) with 68% (28) of those events impacting coastal states. On just the east and Gulf coasts of the U.S. alone, the insured value and cost to replace residential and commercial structures tops \$8.9 trillion. In addition, the U.S. coastal population is projected to grow by 8% by 2020 (increasing by 10 million for a total population of approximately 134 million) resulting in increasing demand on natural areas and ocean resources for commercial activities (e.g. marine transportation, tourism, energy, etc), recreation, and food from fishing and aquaculture.

In light of these threats, developing and implementing actions that build coastal

community resilience makes economic sense and promotes security. This program is intended to encourage actions that provide both economic and environmental co-benefits for communities. It is well understood that healthy coastal ecosystems contribute to healthy coastal economies and the two cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. As such, actions to build resilience that provide both economic and environmental benefits are likely to be highly effective in building resilience of coastal communities. Another primary objective of this program is to support development and implementation of regional approaches to building resilience of coastal communities. The complexity involved in building resilience often requires information, knowledge, and skills that are distributed across a diverse group of organizations and sectors. Thus, in the context of this program a regional approach to implementing resilience strategies is expected to be highly collaborative. The approach involves leveraging resources and mechanisms (human, financial, data/information, programs, partnerships), builds coordination across jurisdictions and/or sectors and results in new or additional local capabilities and capacity across a broad geographic area. The geographic scale for a regional approach may be multi-state, multi-county, multi-city/town, or multi-site.

Proposals for this competition should address specific, identified needs of coastal communities (i.e., hazard mitigation, climate adaptation, disaster redevelopment, land and ocean use, watershed plans, etc.). Appropriate activities to build community resilience may include, but are not limited to, developing or implementing plans, policies, regulations, guidelines and incentives that enhance community preparedness, recovery, or adaptation to extreme weather, climate hazards, and/or changing ocean conditions.

Funds will be available to support activities that:

- Identify and address priority data, information, and capacity gaps
- Develop tools, as needed, to inform sound, science-based decisions, which support regional efforts to plan for a resilient ocean and coastal economy
- Acquire and integrate socioeconomic information with physical and biological information to improve the assessment of risk and vulnerability for planning and decision making
- Understand how hazards and changing ocean conditions affect coastal economies, including existing and emerging sectors that depend on the ocean and coasts
- Develop the information and approaches needed for improved risk communication,

and the necessary tools, technical assistance and training tailored toward enhanced resilience to weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions

- Evaluate the costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of systems-based development or redevelopment approaches that incorporate both natural defenses and hard structural solutions

- Support the development of sustainable recovery, redevelopment, and adaptation plans and implement programs and projects that incentivize rebuilding and development approaches which reduce risk and increase resilience

Proposed activities which are location-specific must demonstrate broader geographic impact across the specified region. For example, projects seeking funding for location or site specific planning, redesign, or construction of infrastructure (natural, nature-based or otherwise) to enhance coastal community preparedness, recovery or adaptation are eligible and will be evaluated based upon the extent to which they have broader geographic impact. Appropriate activities for extending geographic impact may include but are not limited to the development of integrated information products, tools, training, or risk communication and outreach. Proposals seeking funding for restoration of habitat primarily for the purpose of ocean and coastal ecosystem resilience (e.g. wetland restoration, dam removal) are discouraged under this announcement, but instead, should consider applying for funding through the Coastal Ecosystem Resilience Grants program administered by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service.

B. Program Priorities

This announcement solicits proposals that will result in increased resilience through the development or implementation of plans or actions that improve preparedness, and/or promote recovery and/or adaptation within multiple coastal jurisdictions or locations.

Projects/proposals are expected to:

- result in increased resilience of coastal communities through regional activities that reduce current and potential future risk associated with extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions; increase capacity to recover from adverse events; and/or increase capacity to effectively adapt to adverse events;

- employ a regional approach that engages appropriate stakeholders and demonstrates collaboration and leveraging of resources;
- result in increased access to and/or understanding of information for decision makers regarding current and future environmental, economic, and social conditions and/or increased capacity to incorporate this type of information into decision/rule making across the project area.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- 1) focus on resilience strategies that address land and ocean use, development, resource management, resource protection, hazard mitigation, pre-disaster recovery, or other similar plans. This includes the creation of new tools, training, workshops, or other resources that build capacity of decision makers or practitioners;
- 2) leverage available resources (such as programs, plans, partnerships, tools and trainings across government, industry, and NGOs) and/or leverage Federal funding with direct or in-kind match from non-Federal sources;
- 3) evaluate project results using clear measure(s) of success and monitor longer-term effectiveness of employed strategies where appropriate. The collection of additional data or information for monitoring effectiveness is eligible; however, only for the duration of the award's period of performance. If data collection is proposed, applicants are encouraged to plan for longer-term data management needs in coordination with NOAA, as described in section 4.1.A of this announcement.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under Section 310 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1456c) (titled "Technical Assistance").

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$5,000,000 for FY2015. Within this amount, we anticipate funding approximately 5-10 awards. The maximum amount that may be requested for the Federal share of each proposal is \$1,000,000 and the minimum that may be requested is \$500,000. The amount of funding per project will depend on the size, location, and type of project. There is no limit on the number of proposals from any

geographic area or jurisdiction.

The exact amount of funds for each award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Applicants must be in good standing with all existing NOAA grants in order to receive funds.

Proposals not funded in the current fiscal period may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

B. Project/Award Period

Applicants may submit applications with a period of performance of up to 36 months from the anticipated start date. For FY 2015 awards, the anticipated start date for a given project may be as early as November 1, 2015 or as late as January 1, 2016. The start date must be the first day of the month.

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable, however, pre-award costs may be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD provides an award document is at the applicant's own risk.

Proposals not funded in the current fiscal period may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for these awards may be a grant or cooperative agreement. In the case of a cooperative agreement, NOAA will have substantial involvement in the project. Examples of substantial Federal involvement may include: acquiring, increasing access to, and building capacity of partners to use data, tools, and established policies or management practices; convening partners; or providing expertise in meeting planning, facilitation, and development of spatial databases, models and information analyses. If NOAA is proposed

as a partner in a cooperative agreement, the applicant must clearly identify this funding instrument in the proposal summary and cover sheet and clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of NOAA and each partner in implementing the project. The specific roles and responsibilities will depend on negotiation with the Federal agency and will be formalized as part of the cooperative agreement for successful proposals.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible funding applicants are: regional organizations (see III.C for explanation), nonprofit organizations, private (for-profit) entities, institutions of higher education, and state, territorial, tribal, and local governments as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.64, which includes counties, municipalities, and cities. To be eligible under this competition, applicants must conduct projects benefiting coastal communities in one or more of the following U.S. states and territories: Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands (U.S.), Washington, and Wisconsin.

Applications from individuals, federal agencies, or employees of federal agencies will not be considered, but these entities may serve as collaborative project partners. If federal agencies are collaborators, applicants must provide detail on the expected level of federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to a partnership role serving in a review capacity; or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-Federal funds (through cash or in-kind services) at a 2:1 ratio of Federal-to-non-Federal contributions. For example, a project requesting \$500,000 in Federal funding, the award recipient would need

to provide \$250,000 in non-Federal matching contributions, for a total project budget of \$750,000.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

For the purpose of eligibility under this announcement, regional organizations are considered entities that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale, such as regional ocean partnerships or councils of government, for example, provided that they may receive and expend Federal funds. If a regional organization is not eligible to receive and expend Federal funds as a legal entity, the organization may partner with an eligible legal entity to apply for funding. Tribal governments include all Native American tribal governments (both Federally-recognized tribes and those tribes that are not Federally-recognized). Tribal governments are encouraged to work on a multi-site scale that builds resilience across the tribal jurisdiction but are not required to work with other tribes on a cross tribal scale. Foreign governments are not eligible to apply for funding under this announcement.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages for proposals are available through the apply function on Grants.gov. If an applicant does not have Internet access, application packages shall be requested from Lisa Warr, 1305 East-West Hwy, N/OCM6, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or contact her at 301-563-1153 or via email to Lisa.S.Warr@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A
- Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, all funding application packages are requested to contain the components

described below.

Full proposals should total no more than 10 pages (single-spaced, 11 or 12-point font and exclusive of appendices). The 10-page limit does not include the proposal title page, a table of contents if one is included, the project summary referenced below under item IV.B.2, and any appendices. Appendices shall be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, detailed budget information, letters of collaboration, letters of support, resumes, environmental compliance/permit information, professional references, lists of data sources, maps and, if applicable, engineer's design plans). Appendices should not total more than 30 total pages excluding government forms, NEPA information, and information provided to complete government forms. Reviewers will not review information provided in excess of stated page limits. The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined should not exceed five megabytes in storage space. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

Applicants are encouraged to paginate their proposal and any appendices. Appendices should be paginated as stand-alone documents (individually) or collectively.

All funding application packages are requested to contain the following components:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet)

- a. Project title
- b. Complete contact information for the Principal Investigator and Financial Representative
- c. Proposed project performance period (start and end dates)
- d. Specific location(s) (including State(s)) where the project will take place
- e. Funding type (grant or cooperative agreement)
- f. Funding request by year (as appropriate)

2. Project Summary. Provide a one to two-page summary of the proposed project. The summary is requested to contain the following sections:

- a. Project name/title

- b. Proposed funding over each year of the project
- c. Primary contact (name, title, address, phone, fax, email)
- d. Recipient institution (use name as registered in DUNS)
- e. Recipient DUNS number
- f. Principal and other investigators (names, affiliated institutions or agencies)
- g. Brief project summary including objectives, expected results, and intended benefits

3. Project Description.

All project descriptions (proposals) should include the following sections:

a. Goal and Objective(s). Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved. If the proposal is for a multi-year project, goals and objectives should be specific for each year of the work plan presented. The project outcomes should be clearly stated, including: a description of the expected reductions in risk and/or improvements in capacity of communities to recover or adapt to extreme weather, climate hazards, and/or changing ocean conditions; the regional approach that will be used, which describes how federal, state, tribal, regional and local organizations or programs will be connected, integrated, and leveraged; and how the proposal will improve decision-makers' access to or capacity to incorporate information on current and future conditions into decisions. Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports in which progress against these goals and objectives will be reported.

b. Background. Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem, gap or need to be addressed and the status of ongoing efforts and coordination to address the identified needs or gaps. Summarize the relationship of the proposed work to other ongoing efforts.

c. Approach. Provide a work plan that: identifies specific tasks to be accomplished; explains the technical approach needed to accomplish the proposed tasks (including data management and sharing); identifies the roles of partners and cooperators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. Describe how the project implements strategies within regional, federal, state, tribal or local plans, including but not limited to land and ocean use, development, resource management, resource protection/restoration, hazard mitigation, pre-disaster recover, or other similar plans. Describe the approach to leveraging available resources, such as programs, plans partnerships, tools and trainings across government, industry and NGOs, and the need for

any new tools, training, or workshops. If environmental data is to be collected or generated through this project, the work plan must clearly address data management requirements, and the steps to be taken to achieve efficient and effective data access and archive that is compliant with federal regulations.

d. Partnerships. Describe the roles of partners, including their experience and capacity in successfully completing similar projects. Also, describe what federal, state, and local organizations or programs will be connected, integrated, and leveraged in the project, including connections to federally-supported resilience efforts (e.g. Climate Action Communities or NOAA Sentinel Site Cooperatives). If the project includes federal partners, the specific roles and responsibilities of the federal partners should be clearly identified. Describe how project stakeholders will interact with the project, specific communication mechanisms utilized, and how they will contribute to the outcome or results of the project. Letters of collaboration from identified partners and any letters of support from communities or other interested parties should be included in the appendices as appropriate.

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

f. Project Budget. Provide a budget description that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package (Form SF-424A) and a brief narrative justification of the budget. Detailed budget information, such as a repeat of the information in Form SF-424A along with more details must be included in an appendix. In this appendix, the budget narrative also shall clearly identify the cost of separable elements of the proposed work and shall identify the elements of the project that the cooperator would recommend for revision or elimination if sufficient funding is not available for all proposed activities. Budget narrative guidance from NOAA's Grants Management Division is available at: www.coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-GMD-04.09.2015.pdf

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Equipment purchases also require a lease vs. purchase assessment. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.33 "Equipment".

Applicants should identify the entity or entities to which they will request NOAA's approval to transfer equipment or property ownership to after the project ends or when such

equipment or property is no longer needed for its original purpose under the award, if that information is known at the time of application. The decision on property ownership requests will generally be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.311 “Real Property” and 2 C.F.R. § 200.313 “Equipment”.

The budget narrative must also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants must state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants must allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

All travel must comply with the requirements of the Fly America Act and foreign travel must receive prior written approval, and therefore, should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in an annual NOAA Grants Management Division workshop for recipients.

g. Public engagement and outcomes. Describe how the public and stakeholders will be engaged in the development of the desired project outcomes, how information generated by the project will reach its target audience(s) and have a positive impact in the project area(s); and how the proposal uses best practices for communicating risk to target audiences.

4. Appendices

Only material that is submitted as a single package will be reviewed. Appendices must be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, detailed budget information, letters of collaboration, resumes, references, lists of data sources, and maps).

a. Mandatory detailed budget information, for example Forms SF-424A for each sub award and contract. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or subaward.

b. Letters of Collaboration. All supporting letters from partner organizations that

are instrumental to the project shall be included in the application package. Letters should clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Letters of collaboration do not need original signatures.

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

d. Data Sharing Plan. 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 years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. 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 (e.g. a plan for maintaining such access beyond the award's period of performance); and prior experience in publishing such data. Coordination with NOAA in the development of the Data/Information Sharing Plan is encouraged to identify broader applicability of 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.

PIs must indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.

NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.htm

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e. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance -- Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA.

After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of 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 applicants selected for funding must complete sections A, B, C, D, E, and F of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants ("NEPA Questionnaire") (OMB Approval No.: 0648-0538) <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf> 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). Sections G, and H are not required with the initial application because NOAA anticipates that most projects funded through this competition would not have impacts related to damage assessment and restoration or fisheries sampling and analysis.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA websites: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/> including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/ceq_regulations/regulations.html or http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf?redirect=301ocm

f. Paperwork Reduction Act -- This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Forms SF-424, 424A, 424B, and SF

LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0044, 0348-0043, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. The NEPA Questionnaire is approved by OMB control number: 0648-0538.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subjected 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.

g. Other appendices may include relevant information not provided elsewhere, such as references, lists of data sources, and maps.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be (1) received and validated by Grants.gov; or (2) postmarked or provided to a delivery service on or before the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on July 24, 2015. Regardless of the method of transmission, applications received more than five calendar days after the deadline will not be reviewed.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications under this announcement are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." For states that participate in this process, it is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's website <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc>.

E. Funding Restrictions

Applicants requesting indirect costs are required to submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package.

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway
9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

F. Other Submission Requirements

Full proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the apply function on Grants.gov. The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and be registered in System for Award Management (SAM). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.). An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date.

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.473). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email messages from

Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, one set of originals (signed) and an electronic copy (on CD or DVD) of the full proposals and related forms shall be mailed to the attention of Lisa Warr, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Hwy, N/OCM6, Room 10626, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications provided to a private delivery service (e.g. FedEx) must be documented with a receipt. No email or fax copies of full proposals will be accepted. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaborations and any letters of support, shall be submitted together in one package.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM):

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. It also must state that the Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency 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.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to build 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 applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>

Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25, which may be accessed online at

[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.t
pl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl)

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (35 points): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, tribal, or local activities. Projects/proposals will be evaluated according to the degree to which they:

- support activities that are likely to reduce current and potential future risk to regions, communities, and existing and emerging sectors associated with extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions; increase capacity to recover from adverse events; or increase capacity to effectively adapt to adverse events (10 points);

- employ a regional approach that engages a range of stakeholders and demonstrates collaboration and leveraging of resources, as evidenced by letters of collaboration from partners and community members (10 points);

- improve access to and/or understanding of information for decision makers

regarding current and future environmental, economic, and social conditions and improve capacity to incorporate this information into planning and decision/rule making across the project area (10 points); and

- support other NOAA and Administration priorities (5 points).

2. Technical and scientific merit (20 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 this competition, projects/proposals will be evaluated according to the degree to which:

- the approach is fully described and the stated goals and objectives are technically sound, safe for the public, and use the appropriate methods and personnel, including any methods to evaluate results and monitor effectiveness, and methods outlined in the Data Sharing Plan (7 points);

- the project supports strategies called for or developed by regional, federal, state, tribal or local entities including but not limited to land and ocean use, development, resource management, resource protection/restoration, hazard mitigation, pre-disaster recovery, or other similar plans (8 points); and

- the project leverages available resources, such as programs, plans, partnerships, tools and trainings within NOAA and across government, industry, and NGOs (5 points).

3. Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (20 points): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For this competition, projects/proposals will be evaluated according to the degree to which:

- an applicant demonstrates the capacity (e.g. staffing, resources, expertise and authority) and experience in successfully completing similar projects (12 points); and

- the project involves the appropriate partners to execute the project, as well as the key personnel from other agencies and institutions partnering on the project with the experience, expertise and/or networks needed to capitalize on available expertise (8 points).

4. Project costs (15 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For this competition, projects/proposals will be evaluated according to the degree to which:

- the budget request is reasonable, the applicant justifies the costs requested, and the requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits are for those personnel directly involved in implementing the proposed project and/or are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project (6 points);

- the project optimizes the cost effectiveness of the project to leverage Federal resources through strategic partnerships with collaborating institutions, agencies, or other entities (5 points); and,

- indirect costs are based on the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by the applicant's cognizant agency for indirect costs and that other administrative costs have been minimized to the extent possible (4 points).

5. Outreach and Education (10 points): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and/or outreach strategy regarding the NOAA's mission to understand and protect the Nation's natural resources. For this competition, this strategy should describe approaches for communicating with various audiences and employ best practices for risk communication. Projects/proposals will be evaluated according to the degree to which:

- Engagement: the proposal demonstrates that the public and project stakeholders will be engaged in development of the desired project outcomes (8 points); and

- Outreach: the proposal demonstrates that information generated by the project will reach its target audience and have a positive impact in the project area(s), including improved risk communication (2 points).

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in three steps: 1) an initial screening by competition program staff within NOAA's Office for Coastal Management; 2) a merit review; and 3) final selection by the Selecting Official (i.e., Director of the Office for Coastal Management or the Director's designee). The merit review step will involve at least three reviewers per application. The Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based on the numerical ranking of the applications, the evaluations by the merit reviewers, and the selection factors set in V.C., below.

1. Initial Screening. The initial screening will ensure that application packages have all required forms and application elements and meet all of the eligibility criteria. Applications that pass this initial screening will be submitted for merit review.

2. Merit Review. Eligible applications for this competition will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weights described in this solicitation by at least three independent peer reviewers through an independent peer mail review and/or an independent peer panel. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer reviewers through mail reviews or on the review panels. If a panel is convened, the panel will be comprised of subject matter experts and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference or electronic means. The merit reviewer's ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

3. Final Selection. The competition program staff will create a ranking of the proposals to be recommended for funding using the average merit review or panel review scores, if a panel review is conducted. The reviewer comments, composite project scores, rank order, and a summary of the concerns (if any) identified through the mail and/or panel review process along with information from the competition manager pertaining to selection factors (see below) will be presented to the Selecting Official.

Based on the numerical ranking, merit review written evaluations, and the additional selection factors described below, the Selecting Official will develop a list of projects recommended for funding. Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend only partial funding, based on the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The final panel ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final

funding recommendations. The competition manager will make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically.
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners.
 - d. By research areas.
 - e. By project types.
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors as described in section 1 of this federal funding opportunity.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA anticipates that most grants will have a start date of November 1, 2015 or December 1, 2015 dependent on funding availability, the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, NEPA analysis, and documentation supporting cooperative agreement activities.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Full proposals/applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email that their application was not recommended for funding within 10 business days after the final program office recommendations have been approved by the NOAA GMD.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

2. Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements

(Uniform Guidance), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Note that the Uniform Guidance supersedes DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. In accordance with the Federal Register notice published on December 19, 2014 (79 FR 75871) and the regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, the DOC adopted the Uniform Guidance, codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, effective December 26, 2014, which means that the guidance applies to all new awards and may apply to additional funding to existing awards made on or after December 26, 2014. In addition, the audit requirements of the Uniform Guidance apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which may be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-subtitleA-chapII-subchap-id302.pdf>. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the

Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar/>.

3. Limitation of Liability

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA Grants Officer, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for any proposal preparation costs. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Applicants must be in good standing with all existing NOAA grants and/or cooperative funding agreements in order to receive funds. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project, obligate any available funds, or provide special fishing privileges.

The NOAA program office reserves the right to immediately halt activity under the award if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award.

4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). See the NEPA information in Section IV. B.4.e of this announcement.

5. Unpaid or delinquent tax liability.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients are required to provide semi-annual financial and performance reports. Performance reports are required every six months from the time an award starts until it is closed. They are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Within 30 days of the conclusion of each six-month period, recipients must submit a report summarizing activities

conducted in support of the project during the prior six months. Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer. NOAA's Grants Management Division (GMD) will also provide guidance for its semi-annual financial reporting requirements. Each grant recipient will need to demonstrate, through performance and financial reports, that all award conditions have been met before an award can be closed. Financial and performance reporting, as well as all other grant management activities after a grant is awarded, are conducted electronically through NOAA's grants management system, NOAA Grants On-line, at <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/>.

The recipient will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's GMD and are up to date. In their final progress report, recipients will be asked to a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project and products in the coastal management community; and b) certify that "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)."

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory in accordance with relevant OMB requirements, which shall be incorporated under the award. The equipment requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance are set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313. As applicable, the recipient must submit Form SF-428 (Tangible Personal Property Report) annually and in the final progress report. Form SF-428 may be attached as an appendix to progress reports. The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete an "other" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

As applicable, the recipient must report on real property annually and at award closeout, by completing Form SF-429 (Real Property Status Report).

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.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact Lisa Warr, Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Hwy, N/OCM6, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or contact her at 301-563-1153 or via email to Lisa.S.Warr@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

The Office for Coastal Management will not release the names of applicants submitting proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out information about NOAA awards < <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/publicSearch/begin.do> > or go through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOIA process is online at <http://www.noaa.gov/foia/>

Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA.

Applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, you should mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 5 U.S.C 552, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.