

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 2013 Disaster Relief Appropriations Act for Coastal Resilience Networks

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-CSC-2013-2003866

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.483, NOAA Programs for Disaster Relief Appropriations Act - Non-Construction and Construction

Dates: Full proposals must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on September 30, 2013.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to solicit grant proposals from eligible organizations to implement activities that enhance the hazards resilience of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement shall provide beneficial public outcomes for coastal communities related to addressing existing and future risks to the natural environment, infrastructure, local economies, and vulnerable populations. Proposals must also leverage, enhance, or create a human or technical network in which one or more coastal hazard issues can be addressed through enhanced communication, cooperation, coordination, and/or collaboration. Proposals must include a range of partners from various institutions, disciplines, and sectors at the local, state, tribal and federal level. Eligible funding applicants are: regional authorities, nonprofit and for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, Indian Tribal governments, and state, county and local governments. The proposed activities of the funding applicants must support of the recovery of communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, or Maryland.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, coastal communities in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland are confronted with complex problems that require a diverse set of resources and knowledge from multiple institutions, disciplines, and sectors. To prepare for future hazards, Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts must be driven by principles of resilience and sustainability that consider the changing environment and community needs. The objective of this program is to address immediate priority recovery issues of coastal communities while concurrently enhancing resilience to future events through adaptation. Activities solicited under this competition should increase longer-term resilience capacity (at local, state, regional, and/or national level) by creating or enhancing human and/or technical networks that improve communication, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration across agencies, disciplines, jurisdictions, and/or sectors. It is also expected that activities solicited under this competition will, where appropriate, be consistent with the 'Infrastructure Systems Rebuilding Principles' developed by NOAA and USACE. These principles can be found by visiting <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/resources/docs/infsysrebuildingprinciples.pdf> .

Projects associated with this announcement should directly support the following objectives:

1. An informed society anticipating and responding to a changing climate and its impacts. (NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Goal)
2. Society is prepared for and responds to sudden and prolonged high impact events. (NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Goal)
3. Pursue risk-wise strategies based on sound risk and vulnerability assessment methods and risk behavior and communication principles. (NOAA Coastal Services Center Strategic Objective)
4. Protect ecosystem services through conservation strategies to improve climate adaptation and hazard resilience. (NOAA Coastal Services Center Strategic Objective)

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must a) provide significant beneficial public outcomes through engagement and b) include a strategy to leverage, enhance, or create a human or technical network as described below.

a) Beneficial public outcomes through engagement. Projects must generate significant beneficial public outcomes and include opportunities for public engagement in understanding, managing, and adapting to coastal risks. These outcomes shall provide public benefit for coastal communities to address existing and potential future coastal risks to natural systems, communities, infrastructure, local economies, and vulnerable populations (i.e., flooding, storm surge, tsunamis, hurricanes, erosion, drought, sea level rise, extreme weather events.). Projects must also include an audience specific outreach component that considers understanding and perception of hazard risk; local knowledge, culture, traditions and terminology; and risk communication best practices. Projects shall fit within at least one of the following programmatic priority areas.

1. Hazard Resilient Communities: Enhance the capacity of communities to plan for and implement recovery actions that enhance their resilience to coastal hazards, including:

a. provide tools and information that support the development of comprehensive community recovery and redevelopment plans;

b. help communities understand, access, analyze and incorporate information about environmental, economic, and social risk; and

c. enhance the capacity of communities to understand and plan for changing environmental, economic and social conditions.

Activities aligned with Priority 1 should include community level planning and policy development efforts; community based training and/or technical assistance; collection and management of physical, geospatial and/or social science data; development and implementation of technical or decision-support tools or process guides; risk and vulnerability assessments; or other activities that directly enhance community resilience through substantial community involvement. Topical areas of interest could include planning and management of floodplains and shorelines and/or strengthening local plans and policies through the inclusion of future conditions in hazard mitigation or comprehensive plans. In addition, special needs of underserved and vulnerable populations may need to be considered.

2. Resilient Coastlines: Enhance the resilience of coastal areas by providing decision makers with baseline information and technical assistance that support the identification and implementation of natural shoreline restoration activities including:

a. Assess damage to the shorelines within Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, or Maryland with a focus on shoreline and nearshore aquatic habitats that support NOAA trust resources. Assessment could consist of any of the following:

i. compiling and analyzing existing, historical, and/or new data/information collected since the storm;

ii. identifying data gaps;

iii. supporting additional field-based and remote sensing assessments of impacts.

b. Analyze the most suitable shoreline restoration techniques for damaged areas.

Activities to be considered include:

i. developing decision support criteria based on information in (a.) to inform state policies and assist communities in making decisions regarding which technique is most appropriate for a given location; and

ii. providing technical assistance on how to implement specific restoration techniques for a chosen community.

Activities aligned with Priority 2 constitute a sequential framework for achieving the desired end result of improved shoreline resilience. Some of the activities described above may already be underway or completed (e.g., work conducted under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study). Therefore, applicants do not need to propose a work plan for all elements of the priority, but should address how their proposal builds off of previous and/or ongoing efforts to achieve the goals of Priority 2. Activities shall maximize benefits to NOAA trust resources and coastal communities and take into consideration the constraints presented by the natural and built environments. Work should not focus on urban built environments where incorporating wetland and other natural shoreline restoration techniques are not feasible.

b) Networks. Projects must enhance, leverage, or create a human or technical network that improves communication, cooperation, coordination, or collaboration among multiple agencies, organizations, disciplines, jurisdictions, and/or sectors. Human networks may include professional networks or associations, regional entities, sector-based or topical coordinating bodies, community-based or civic working groups, and/or other groups of individuals working together, either formally or informally, for a common purpose. A technical network may include online communities of practice, data sharing or interoperability mechanisms, decision support tools, or other technical systems that connect and leverage a wide range of resources. Proposals related to technical networks should identify intended users and ways in which those users will be involved in network design, testing and review, and implementation. Examples of networks include:

i. Developing a community of practice where natural resource managers, planners, academics, and contractors can share concepts/designs, exchange ideas, and undertake natural shoreline restoration activities.

ii. Use an existing training network of extension, outreach and education staff to ensure mapping and visualization products are well integrated into existing management efforts.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1456c (Technical Assistance) and Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, Public Law 113-2.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is approximately \$1,700,000 and is subject to the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2013 appropriations. The anticipated federal funding per award (min-max) is \$200,000 to \$500,000 with a maximum period of 24 months. The anticipated number of awards ranges from four (4) to six (6), approximately, and will be adjusted based on available funding. 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.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. 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 awards in order to receive funds.

B. Project/Award Period

The duration of Disaster Relief Appropriations Act (DRA) of 2013 related projects shall not exceed 24 months, unless an OMB waiver has been approved.

No-cost extensions beyond a project period of 24 months will not be approved for this competition. All grant funds under this competition must be expended within 24 months, and any unexpended funds after that 24 month period will be recaptured by NOAA.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for these awards will be cooperative agreements, which allows the federal government to have substantial involvement in grant activities. Examples of

involvement are: 1) acquiring, increasing access to, and enhancing capacity to use data and tools; 2) convening partners and building diverse teams to accomplish broad based work; providing meeting planning and facilitation services; 3) developing spatial databases, models, and analyses to address the identified management needs; and/or 4) guiding the development of social, economic and other human dimension information and analyses. If the NOAA Coastal Services Center, Pacific Services Center, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, or Restoration Center is proposed as a partner in proposed activities, applicants must clearly articulate those roles and responsibilities and discuss prospective roles.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible funding applicants are regional authorities, nonprofit and for profit organizations, institutions of higher education, Indian Tribal governments, and state, county and local governments. These entities must be proposing work that will be conducted in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, or Maryland and directly support the recovery of communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy in those five states.

The following types of organizations are encouraged to either submit proposals or participate in proposal development and provide in-kind services: institutions of higher education; land use authorities; port authorities; housing authorities; public works authorities; transportation authorities; critical facility authorities; emergency management authorities; community service organizations; stewardship organizations; and conservation organizations.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners. If federal agencies are collaborators, applicants must provide detail in the application on the level of federal engagement. Examples might include, but are not limited to, providing additional funding, in-kind services, or serving in a review capacity.

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

There is no requirement for cost sharing, however cost-sharing and inclusion of in-kind contributions is encouraged. Evaluation criteria stated in Section V, Item 4 under Application Evaluation Criteria takes into consideration cost sharing.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Applicants requesting indirect costs are required to submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package. For this competition, indirect costs may not exceed a rate of 20%.

If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, the negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (pages 4-6) state Within 90 days of the award start date, the recipient shall submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review. The recipient shall provide the Grants Officer with a copy of the transmittal letter and proposed cost rate agreement sent to the U.S. DOC:

Office of Acquisition Management, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 641, Washington, DC 20230

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 can be requested from Penny Larin at 737 Bishop Street, Suite 1550, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813; or contact her at 808-532-3973 or via email <Penny.Larin@noaa.gov>.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposal applications must 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 two (2), and any appendices. Appendices shall be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, detailed budget information, list of references, letters of support, resumes, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information, references, lists of data sources, and maps). Appendices must not total more than 50 total pages excluding government forms, the NEPA information, and information provided to complete government forms. The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined shall not exceed 5 megabytes in storage space.

Applicants must paginate their proposal and any appendices. Appendices shall be paginated as stand alone documents (individually) or collectively. Proposals failing to

comply with the format prescribed in this section will be deemed incomplete and will not be considered for further review.

All funding application packages must 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. Start and end dates of proposed project

d. Identify the following aspects of the project including i) the state or specific communities where the project will take place, ii) human or technical network(s) that will be leveraged or created, and iii) identification of the programmatic priority(ies) applicable to the project (“Hazard Resilient Communities” or “Resilient Coastlines”)

e. Funding type as a 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 must 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

e. Principal and other investigators (names, affiliated institutions or agencies)

f. Brief project summary including objectives, intended benefits, and a short description of partners and professional or technical networks that will be leveraged or created.

3. Project Description.

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

a. Goal and Objective(s). Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved. Goals and objectives must be specific for each year of the work

plan presented. Recipients will be required to submit quarterly 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 regional efforts.

c. Public engagement and outcomes. Identify and describe the activities and outcomes for the community and public. Identify any gaps that currently exist in understanding, managing, and adapting to coastal risks at the community level, and how the project outcome(s) will address these gaps.

d. Partnerships and networks. Identify and describe the professional or technical network that will be leveraged or created. Describe how the partners and network users will interact with the project, the communication mechanism used to engage the network, and describe how they will use the outcome or results of the project. Describe what existing federal, state, and local organizations or programs will be connected, integrated, and leveraged. Describe the roles of partners and indicate any efforts or resources that will be leveraged in the project. A list of project-relevant references (e.g., partners, supporters) should be included in the appendices. Letters of support may also be included in the appendices, but are not required.

e. Approach. Provide a work plan that: identifies specific tasks to be accomplished; explains the technical approach (including quality assurance) needed to accomplish the tasks; identifies the roles of partners and cooperators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. Describe how the technical or professional network is involved in the planning and design process. 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. If the project includes federal partners, the roles and responsibilities of the federal partners must be clearly identified.

f. Milestone Schedule. Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.

g. Project Budget. Provide a budget description that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package (Standard Form 424-A) 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.

In the detailed budget narrative, the applicant must attest that funds requested will not be used for costs that have been reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, under a contract for insurance, or by self-insurance.

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.

Applicants shall identify, if possible, who is requested to retain ownership of any equipment purchased through grant funds after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer before or during the grant closeout process.

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. Foreign travel must receive prior approval, and therefore, must 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 annual NOAA Grants Management Division workshops for recipients, as well as for meeting with NOAA staff and/or key project personnel.

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, references, resumes, references, lists of data sources, and maps).

a. Mandatory detailed budget information, including budgets and separate SF-424As for each sub-awards and contracts. 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. References. Provide a list of project-relevant references (e.g., partners, supporters) that includes the names of individuals and their organizations and contact information. Letters of support are not required, but may also be included.

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 (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

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

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

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

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

Information on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Policy is available under: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.pdf

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

The applicant must complete the following sections of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants (OMB Approval No.: 0648-0538) 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):

Question C1. Is the proposed activity going to be conducted in partnership with NOAA or would the proposed activity require NOAA's direct involvement, activity, or oversight? If yes, describe NOAA's involvement, activity, or oversight, including the name of the office or program that is involved.

Question C2. Would the proposed activity involve any other Federal agency(ies) partnership, direct involvement, activity, or oversight? If yes, provide the name(s) of the agency(ies) and describe its involvement, activity, or oversight.

Question D1. Provide a brief description of the location of the proposed activity.

Question E1. List any Federal, state, or local permits, authorizations, or waivers that would be required to complete the proposed activity. Provide the date the permit, authorization, or waiver was obtained or will be obtained. Provide copies of the permit, authorization, or waiver as appropriate. Was a NEPA analysis prepared for the permit, authorization, or waiver? If yes, state the title of the NEPA analysis and provide copies of the NEPA analysis.

Question F1. Is there the potential for the proposed activity to cause changes that would be different from normal ambient conditions (for example, temperature, light, turbidity, noise, other human activity levels, etc.)? If yes, describe the changes and the circumstances that would cause these changes.

After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA 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.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <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.

f. Other appendices such as list of data, maps, or reports/documents that outline the recovery need or identified recovery/resilience planning documents resulting from Hurricane Sandy.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on September 30, 2013. For proposals submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication by Grants.gov will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received. Proposals received after the submission deadline will not be reviewed or considered.

D. Intergovernmental Review

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

E. Funding Restrictions

All grant funds under this competition must be expended within 24 months, and any unexpended grant funds remaining after that 24 month period will be recaptured by NOAA.

F. Other Submission Requirements

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. Potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. 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.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, one set of originals (signed) and an electronic copy (on CD or DVD) of the proposals and related forms shall be mailed to the attention of Penny Larin, NOAA Pacific Services Center, 737 Bishop Street, Suite 1550, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaborations, shall be submitted together in one package.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Full Application 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, tribal, regional, state, or local activities. For the Coastal Resilience Networks this includes the following categories:

a. Program objectives and priorities: Does the project directly address one or more of the two program priorities? Does it provide significant value to communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy by enhancing resilience and building long-term adaptive capacity and/or supporting effort to restore natural shorelines? (10 points)

b. Leveraging, enhancing, or creation of a human or technical network or system: Does the project leverage or establish a professional or technical network or system? Does it demonstrate integration of federal, state, tribal, or local organizations and activities and promote interoperability? Does it leverage expertise from multiple disciplines? Does the project leverage or integrate into existing statewide recovery or resilience planning processes or efforts as a result of Hurricane Sandy? (10 points)

c. Recovery priorities. Does the proposal address recovery priorities documented by federal or state agencies? Does the proposal address capacity challenges documented by federal or state agencies? (10 points)

d. Partnerships: Does the project employ a collaborative approach? Does it include the key partners necessary to achieve its goals and objectives? Does the proposal include specific tasks and roles for partners? (5 points)

2. Technical and scientific merit (20 points): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, of significant need, and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the Coastal Resilience Networks this includes the following categories:

a. Are the project goals and objectives clearly defined, focused, and realistic within the proposed time-frame? Is the approach appropriate for the stated goals and objectives? Will the proposed goals and objectives have positive impacts that directly contribute to recovery efforts within 18 months of the award? (10 points)

b. Applications must contain an outline with clear timelines for execution and completion of work. The outline must demonstrate that the applicants will be able to expend funds within the 24 month period following grant obligation, unless an OMB waiver has

been approved. Does the proposal provide a work plan that clearly identifies specific tasks to be accomplished? Does it identify the roles of the partners? Are the tasks directly related to a clear, tangible, and significant need for that state or region? (5 points)

c. Does the proposed approach incorporate current guidance, scientific, and/or technical advancements in the design and implementation of the proposed work? (5 points)

3. Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (20 points): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary capacity, expertise, education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the Coastal Resilience Networks Program this includes the following categories:

a. Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Are the investigators qualified and does the organization have the capacity to conduct a project of the nature and scope proposed? (8 points)

b. Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the target audience and familiarity with the highest priority recovery needs? (8 points)

c. Are the partners involved in the project qualified? Do they bring the right mix of expertise and capabilities to the project to ensure an integrated approach? (4 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 the Coastal Resilience Networks this includes the following categories:

a. Is the budget request reasonable and does the applicant justify the proposed budget request? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and/or are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project? (7 points)

b. Is the cost effectiveness of the project optimized through strategic partnerships and cost-sharing with collaborating institutions, agencies, or private-sector partners? (8 points)

5. Outreach and education (10 points): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to understand and protect the Nation's natural resources. For the Coastal Resilience Networks this includes the following categories:

a. Engagement: Does the proposal demonstrate that the human or technical network has been or will be engaged in development and/or implementation of the desired project? (5 points)

b. Outreach activities: Does the proposal lay out a clear approach for ensuring that information generated by the project will reach its target audience and have a positive impact

in the study area? Does the proposal outline an outreach or communication strategy that will improve and sustain dialogue and information sharing amongst the community or network? Does the project contain an audience appropriate outreach component? (e.g., perception of risk; local knowledge, culture, and terminology; understanding of local hazards and impacts) (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Full Proposal Review and Selection Process: All proposals will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by at least three independent peer reviewers through an independent merit review process. The merit reviewer's ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals. Appropriate mechanisms will be established to avoid conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. The Selecting Official will make the final recommendation for award to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

Proposals that are not funded in the current fiscal period may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without having to repeat the competitive review process.

C. Selection Factors

The final panel ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The competition manager may first 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

The start date on proposals shall be on March 1, 2014; or the first day of any proceeding month after March 1, 2014 but no later than May 1, 2014.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail once the recommended awards are made.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634); are applicable to this solicitation. A copy of the notice may be obtained at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>."

2. Limitation of Liability: Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to provide special fishing privileges.

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

4. Felony and Tax Certification for Corporations: 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.

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

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

B. 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.

C. 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.

Ensure that programs have consistent prominent labels and tags in announcements, notices, and on signage that clearly distinguish them as DRA actions.

6. Any organization submitting a proposal in response to this announcement must have and maintain an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration < <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>>. Awards will not be processed unless the recipient has an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM). The link is below:

<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. The link is:

C. Reporting

A. Financial and progress reporting requirements shall be quarterly. Financial and performance (technical) progress reports shall be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online System. Instructions for submitting financial and progress reports will be provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division. Grantees should also anticipate and prepare for frequent site visits with NOAA during the award period.

B. 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.

C. Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and are up-to-date. Applicants in their final progress report 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)."

D. If equipment is purchased with grant funds, applicants may be asked to submit an equipment inventory in accordance with 15 CFR 14.34(f)(3), 15 CFR 24.32(b) or 15 CFR 24.32(d)(2) as an appendix to progress reports. Further, the program office recommends that recipients 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 period 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 15 CFR 14.34(g)-(h) and 15 CFR 24.32(g)(2).

E. Awards selected through this competition will be required to have the following Special Award Conditions (SACs). These include:

E1. Administrative SAC - Quarterly Reporting of Financial Reports: Federal Financial Report (SF-425, Final Full Report) - Interim quarterly Federal Financial Reports are due no

later than 30 days after the quarterly reporting periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 for the entire project period of the award.

Federal Financial Report (SF-425, Final Full Report) - A comprehensive Federal Financial Report must be submitted, within 90 days after award expiration. The report shall cover the entire project period from the start date through the end date of the original award, or approved extended end date of the award, and must include the cumulative total of indirect costs charged to the award.

E2. Programmatic SAC - 24 Month Requirement: Unless an OMB waiver has been granted, all projects funded under the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act (DRA) of 2013 shall not exceed 24 months. In addition, all work and the expenditure of funds shall be completed within the 24 month period following the effective date of the award.

Performance/Progress Reports - Interim Performance/Progress Reports are due on the same frequency as the Federal Financial Report. A comprehensive Performance/Progress Reports must be submitted, within 90 days after award expiration. The report shall cover the entire project period from the start date through the end date of the original award, or approved extended end date of the award.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative questions regarding this announcement, contact Penny Larin, NOAA Pacific Services Center, 737 Bishop Street, Suite 1550, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813, or by phone at 808-532-3973, or by fax 808-532-3224, or via email at <Penny.Larin@noaa.gov>; or James Lewis Free, NOAA Coastal Services Center, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405 or by phone at 843-740-1185, or via email at <James.L.Free@noaa.gov>.

For technical or programmatic questions regarding this announcement, contact Darlene Finch, NOAA Coastal Services Center, Tawes State Office Building E2, 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401, or by phone at 410-260-8899, or via email at <Darlene.Finch@noaa.gov>, or Randall Schneider, NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or by phone at 301-713-3155, x110 or via email at <Randall.Schneider@noaa.gov>.

VIII. Other Information

A. Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other suggestions for reducing this burden to Steve Kokkinakis, NOAA Office of Program Planning and Integration, SSMC 3, Room 15723, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The information collection does not request any proprietary or confidential information. No confidentiality is provided.

Notwithstanding any other provisions 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 Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. NOAA's OMB Approval No. : 0648-0538.

B. Official Award Notice

Official notification of an award notice is provided by the Grants Management Division, not the program office. If one incurs any costs before receiving an award agreement from an authorized NOAA grant official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award.

C. Freedom of Information Act

The Coastal Services Center 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 process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOI process is online at

<<http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~foia/>>.

D. Other Grants.gov Information

Potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete. Applicants must allow sufficient registration time to ensure applications are submitted before the proposal submission deadline. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Allow a minimum of

five days to complete the CCR registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.)

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 (11.483). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application, 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 another email when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.