

## FY18 Coral Reef Conservation Program, Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants

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## 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: FY18 Coral Reef Conservation Program, Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2018-2005425

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.482, Coral Reef Conservation Program

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service or received by [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, February 1, 2018.

When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind the following information necessary to submit an application on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov): (1) a free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM) may take between three and five business days or as long as several weeks (see Section IV.G. of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO)), and (2) if you submit an application via [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) you will receive a series of e-mail notifications for up to two business days before learning via validation or rejection whether NOAA has received your application.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program, 16 USC §§ 6401-6409, provides matching grants of financial assistance through the Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grant program to institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and local (as defined at 2 CFR § 200.64, which includes counties, municipalities, and cities) and Indian tribal government agencies. These awards are intended to support coral reef conservation projects in shallow water coral reef ecosystems, including reefs at mesophotic depths, in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and coral-dominated banks in the U.S. portions of the Gulf of Mexico. Projects may be proposed in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and the U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas, but these locations are not considered geographic priorities under this announcement. Proposals submitted to this competition must address at least one of the following four categories: 1) Fishing Impacts; 2) Land-Based Sources of Pollution; 3) Climate Change; and 4) Local and Emerging Management Issues. Each category is described in more detail in the Federal Funding Opportunity announcement. Proposals selected

for funding through this solicitation will be implemented through a grant or cooperative agreement and will require a 1:1 match of non-Federal funds.

Funding for this program is subject to the availability of FY 2018 Congressional appropriations and is expected to range between approximately \$800,000 to approximately \$1,000,000. Funding made available from NOAA's CRCP is intended to support priority coral reef management activities as described in Section I.B. of this Federal Funding Opportunity announcement. Funding will be divided among the U.S. Pacific and Atlantic regions to maintain the geographic balance of the CRCP Grant Program portfolio overall, as required by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. NOAA expects that each applicant will request Federal funding at a funding level between \$30,000 and \$80,000 under this solicitation and that the average award size will be approximately \$50,000.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

## I. Funding Opportunity Description

## A. Program Objective

Coral reefs and associated seagrass and mangrove communities are among the most complex and diverse ecosystems on earth. They support important fishing and tourism industries, protect coasts from wave and storm damage, build tropical islands, contain an array of potential pharmaceuticals, and provide essential services like food security, livelihood, and culture, among other benefits. As shallow-water, near shore communities, coral reef ecosystems are ecologically linked to adjacent watersheds and are highly vulnerable to human activity. Stresses in the coral reef environment include poor water quality from runoff and inadequate sewage treatment, sedimentation, destructive fishing practices, recreational overuse and misuse, and impacts from climate change, including changes in ocean chemistry.

To address these and other threats, Congress passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (Act), which established the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and provided guidance for allocation of Federal funding toward efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems in the United States and internationally. As described in the Act, one of the primary functions of the CRCP is to provide financial assistance to external partners for coral reef conservation projects consistent with the Act and the CRCP priorities.

As required under the Act, NOAA published the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines on Thursday, August 12, 2010 in Federal Register Vol. 75, No. 155, page 48934. The Guidelines are applicable through Fiscal Year 2015, but will continue to be followed until new Guidelines are issued, subject to further interpretation as described in this funding announcement. The Guidelines are available at: [https://www.coris.noaa.gov/data/pdfs/CRCPGuidelines\\_FRN\\_Aug2010.pdf](https://www.coris.noaa.gov/data/pdfs/CRCPGuidelines_FRN_Aug2010.pdf)

All applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) announcement must be consistent with the requirements stated herein and the CRCP Grant Program Guidelines. Funding is subject to the availability of Federal appropriations.

In FY 2018, the CRCP intends to initiate new awards in the following funding categories:

1. CRCP Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants, and
2. CRCP International Coral Reef Conservation Cooperative Agreements.

All of the following information in this funding opportunity announcement pertains only to the CRCP Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants funding category.

## B. Program Priorities

The Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants program will accept applications for projects that fall within at least one of the following four categories: (a) Fishing Impacts; (b) Land-Based Sources of Pollution; (c) Climate Change; and (d) Local and Emerging Management Needs. The categories include both jurisdictional and national needs that support local coral reef conservation efforts and the CRCP's priorities respectively. The awards will support only activities associated with shallow water coral reef ecosystems, including coral reefs at mesophotic depths, in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and coral-dominated banks in the U.S. portions of the Gulf of Mexico. Although Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) and Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA) locations are not considered geographic priorities under this competition, NWHI and PRIA may propose projects that are relevant to coral reef ecosystems located in the priority geographies noted above.

For the purpose of this solicitation, shallow water coral reef ecosystems include unconsolidated sediments (e.g., sand and mud); mangroves and other emergent vegetation; submerged vegetation (e.g., seagrass and macroalgae); hermatypic coral reefs and associated colonized hardbottom habitats (e.g., spur and groove, individual and aggregated patch reefs, and gorgonian colonized pavement and bedrock); and uncolonized hardbottom (e.g., reef rubble and uncolonized bedrock). Projects focused on coral reef ecosystems at mesophotic depths must clearly describe how the mesophotic reefs are substantially linked to shallow water coral reefs (i.e., have a meaningful ecological connection between the mesophotic area and associated shallow water coral reefs) to be eligible under this competition.

Proposals should address the needs identified by the jurisdictions and/or the national CRCP/NOAA priorities list below, and may support other local or regional planning documents (e.g. Endangered Species Recovery Plans, invasive species management plans, watershed management plans, or support of the NOAA Habitat Focus Areas in Guam, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico). Activities addressing national level priorities can be conducted in any of the jurisdictions.

Preference will be given to organizations with a demonstrated record of accomplishment in conducting successful coral reef conservation projects; projects that involve community-based conservation activities; and projects that develop and disseminate high quality information and materials to relevant user groups and management agencies. Applicants need to provide evidence of support (e.g. letter of support, co-principal investigator, indication of collaboration, or letter of utility of proposed work) for the project by appropriate representatives of States, Territorial, or other government jurisdictions who

manage the area in which the project will be conducted. Applicants are encouraged to consult with all relevant local governmental and non-governmental entities involved in coral reef activities while developing the application and demonstrate collaboration among these entities.

Research activities are eligible only if: 1) the project conducts applied research that directly contributes to improved management and includes prompt mechanisms to disseminate information to resource managers in addition to peer-reviewed publications (e.g., training of managers to use information or direct presentations to managers on project activities and outcomes); or 2) the research activity is a jurisdictional coral reef management priority, in which case the applicant must cite the specific priority and obtain a letter of support from the local coral reef management authority that will utilize research results.

Applicants are also encouraged to show how the proposed activity contributes to other management efforts and plans (e.g., watershed management plans, conservation action plans, local action strategies, communication and outreach strategies, and marine protected area management plans) if applicable, and provide a link to the specific document whenever possible.

Details of the four categories are as follows:

1. Fishing Impacts (FI): Activities under this category must address at least one of the following topics:

- FI-American Samoa: Projects that collect life history and demographic information including length and age-based attributes on commercially important reef fish to help guide local fisheries regulations in American Samoa. Commercially important fish include locally fished parrotfishes, emperors, snappers, groupers, surgeonfishes and other species.
- FI-CNMI: a) Studies to understand the abundance of and habitat utilization (including the frequency and timing transition from shallow to deeper habitats) for the different life stages of shallow bottom (<100 meter contour) juvenile fisheries species listed within bottom fish management unit that spend a portion of their lives in the coral reef environment. This management unit is a grouping used by the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council and includes *Lutjanus kasmira*, *Lutjanus gibbus*, *Caranx ignobilis*, *Caranx lugubris*, *Epinephelus fasciatus*, *Variola louti*, *Lethrinus rubrioperculatus*, etc. b) Studies that increase the jurisdictional understanding of the linkages between herbivorous fish biomass and reef condition.
- FI-Guam: a) Outreach and education activities to increase compliance with fisheries and marine preserve regulations. b) Projects that collect life histories, spawning aggregations, recruitment, and stock assessments for herbivorous fishes, culturally important species, and target species, including bigeye scad (*Selar crumenophthalmus*), groupers (*Variola louti*,

Epinephelus fasciatus), and jacks (*Caranx melampygus*, *Caranx sexfasciatus*).

- FI-Hawaii: Projects that work with the Division of Aquatic Resources to develop standardized citizen science monitoring protocols for the community-based fishing areas.
- FI-US Virgin Islands: Projects that collection information on the abundance and distribution of top coral reef predators (e.g. sharks and larger groupers and snappers).
- FI-National: Projects to obtain essential life history and ecological information on key coral reef fisheries species or functional groups. This includes life history data (e.g. age, growth, reproductive rates) needed for quantitative stock/population assessments, understanding the functional role of herbivorous fishes in coral ecosystems, and identifying and characterizing existing spawning aggregations.

2. Land-Based Sources of Pollution (LBSP): Activities under this category must address at least one of the following topics:

- LBSP-CNMI: a) Projects that help CNMI quantify sediment retention at priority watersheds, Talakhaya watershed in Rota and the Laolao watershed on Saipan, to better gauge the impact of on-going management actions as related to sediment withheld from entering key transport routes of LBSP. b) Projects that serve as behavior change campaigns, conducting public outreach and education focused on reducing and preventing marine and coastal trash and debris.
- LBSP-Guam: Community-based projects designed to decrease erosion and restore watershed vegetation in Guam's priority watersheds (Manell Geus and Piti-Asan) in order to reduce sediment impacts on adjacent reefs.
- LBSP-Hawaii: Implement pollution control activities under one of the following action plans or watershed plans:
  - a)Wahikuli-Honokowai Coastal Conservation Action Plan(<http://www.westmauir2r.com/conservation-action-plan.html>)
  - b)Wahikuli-Honokowai Watershed Management Plan (<http://www.westmauir2r.com/watershed-management-plans.html>)
  - c)Kahana-Honokahua-Honolua Strategies and Implementation Report (<http://www.westmauir2r.com/watershed-management-plans.html>)
  - d)Kahana, Honokahua & Honolua Watershed Planning- Characterization Report
  - e)South Kohala Conservation Action Plan (<http://www.southkhalacoastalpartnership.com/south-kohala-conservation-action-plan.html>)
  - f)Wai'ula'ula Watershed Plan ([https://data.nodc.noaa.gov/coris/library/NOAA/CRCP/other/other\\_crcp\\_publications/Watershed\\_Hawaii/waiulaula\\_plan\\_final\\_w-o\\_appendices.pdf](https://data.nodc.noaa.gov/coris/library/NOAA/CRCP/other/other_crcp_publications/Watershed_Hawaii/waiulaula_plan_final_w-o_appendices.pdf))
  - g)Pelekane Bay Watershed Plan ([http://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/files/2013/05/PRC\\_Maps\\_PelekaneBayWatershedPlan.pdf](http://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/files/2013/05/PRC_Maps_PelekaneBayWatershedPlan.pdf))

Priority activities under these plans include activities such as: 1) Improving the efficiency of fine sediment traps in basins using acceptable dam safety approaches and/or 2) Implementing scale-able green engineering or other low-impact approaches for reducing the quantity of in-stream sediment reaching coastal areas following rain events.

•LBSP–US Virgin Islands: a) Projects that analyze ghut outflows around USVI after heavy rain events to increase understanding of potential pollutant and sedimentation loading from stormwater discharge on near-by coral reefs. b) Projects that assess of the status, health, and effectiveness of existing ponds (both wet and dry) within major ghut routes to determine how full ponds are, the sediment content, how much water can be held, the health (biological community), and estimating how much water can be retained during heavy rain events.

3. Climate Change (CC) - Activities under this category must address at least one of the following topics:

•CC-American Samoa: Projects that work with village communities and local resources managers to assist with environmental conservation and address threats to natural resources while building village level buy-in to support regulatory measures needed to ensure fisheries sustainability, coral reef conservation, and climate change resiliency. Projects should develop frameworks of common understanding between villagers and local resources management agencies and identify the most appropriate strategies to meet American Samoa's resource management and climate change resilience goals.

•CC-Guam: a) Projects that examine mechanisms or characteristics explaining the resilience of certain coral species or coral reef sites to climate-related impacts and studies of reef sites with the potential to serve as refugia including mesophotic reefs and highly turbid sites (e.g. Apra Harbor). b) Projects that develop and apply innovative approaches and novel technologies to protect Guam's coral reefs from climate change impacts.

•CC-Hawaii: Projects that support institutionalizing an existing statewide monitoring database at the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), through the Hawaii Monitoring and Research Collaborative. Priority outcomes include: a) providing analytical support to DAR to monitor change over time; b) identifying priority areas for maximizing resilience; and/or c) evaluating reef status to measure progress towards reaching the Sustainably Hawaii Initiative marine goal of effectively managing 30% of Hawaii's marine environment by 2030.

•CC-National: Projects that implement management actions identified through the reef resilience and vulnerability assessments in the jurisdictions. Applications should identify which plan and management action(s) the proposed work is implementing. For more information see: <https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/projects/climate/>

4. Local and Emerging Management Needs: For this category, the applicant must identify the specific management need the proposal will address and explain how the proposed

project activities and/or products will contribute to meeting the stated need. Proposals under this category may only address the following topics:

#### Coral Disease (CD)

- CD-CNMI: Projects that provide a quantitative baseline of coral disease and increase understanding of disease incidence and prevalence on reefs around Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.
- CD-Guam: Projects that increase understanding of coral diseases on Guam's reefs, including prevalence, transmission mechanisms, ecological impacts, causal factors, and management recommendations.
- CD-US Virgin Islands: Projects that research mitigation methods for coral diseases and recommendations on how manager should respond to outbreaks.

#### Corals Listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- ESA-Florida: Projects that map and provide for emergency sampling and genetic-banking capacity for imperiled genotypes – specifically threatened species.
- ESA-National (Atlantic/Caribbean): Projects that address priority monitoring and science needs for Caribbean corals listed as threatened under the ESA. Priority needs include demographic monitoring, synoptic surveys, monitoring of robust reference populations, applied population enhancement research, adaptation/acclimation to increases in climate stress, reproductive and recruitment success, organismal response to nutrients and contaminants, and effective disease mitigation approaches. For additional information see: [https://data.nodc.noaa.gov/coris/library/NOAA/CRCP/NMFS/SERO/Other/recovery\\_priorities\\_esa\\_corals.pdf](https://data.nodc.noaa.gov/coris/library/NOAA/CRCP/NMFS/SERO/Other/recovery_priorities_esa_corals.pdf)
- ESA-National (Pacific): Projects that improve species identification for ESA listed corals in the US Pacific. Priorities include: a) classroom and field trainings on application of the Species Identification Guide ([https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/Corals\\_FieldID/](https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/Corals_FieldID/)) for coral field surveyors, and/or b) development of molecular tools to confirm identification of "typical" colonies of listed species and/or sort out "ambiguous" colonies that appear to be intermediate between listed and unlisted species, which would be used in conjunction with the identification guide.

#### Invasive/Nuisance Species (IS)

- IS–US Virgin Islands: Projects to increase understanding of lionfish and/or *Halophila* impacts to native ecosystems.

#### Recreational Use (RU)

- RU–Florida: Projects that develop and implement a boater education class for southeast Florida, which may support to the entire Florida Reef Tract, but specifically supports the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

- RU-Guam: Projects that will increase understanding of the impacts of recreational use on Guam's reefs and/or apply research findings to reduce recreational use impacts on local reefs.

#### Coral Restoration (CR)

- CR-Florida: a) Projects that identify and prioritize 'stress hardened' corals (corals that have survived in high stress habitat – ports, effluence, etc.) that should be targeted for propagation efforts under status quo stress scenarios. b) Projects that provide recommendations on optimal outplant design (macro and micro) for propagated corals of opportunity including assessment and optimization for long-term success of outplants.

- CR-Guam: Projects that support coral reef restoration, including expansion of Guam's in situ coral nursery, development of new nurseries, increased out-planting, and developing methods to enhance resilience of transplanted corals and restored reef sites.

- CR-Puerto Rico- Projects that support the reestablishment of coral nurseries in Puerto Rico through nursery maintenance, collection of corals of opportunity to grow in the nurseries, and out-planting of nursery reared corals in priority areas around Puerto Rico. Applicants should coordinate with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to determine sites for coral outplanting.

- CR-US Virgin Islands: Projects that research, develop, and apply innovative coral reef enhancement and restoration techniques. Restoration techniques may include restoration of herbivore communities, sponges, sexual reproduction of corals or anything else that might be a new and innovative way to actively enhance or restore coral reefs in the US Virgin Islands.

- CR-National: a) Projects that: 1) support efforts to increase restoration implementation efficiency; 2) build practitioner capacity in areas with little to no restoration work currently underway, and support moving existing sites into high-production capacity; or 3) operationalize capacity for rearing and outplanting herbivores as part of coral restoration efforts. b) Projects that implement priority coral restoration research: 1) Increasing post-settlement survival of corals reared from larval propagation; 2) interventions to increase coral thermal and disease resilience; and/or 3) development of interventions to respond to disease outbreaks.

#### Monitoring and evaluation (M)

- M-Guam: Projects that conduct an economic evaluation study to update the 2007 economic valuation of Guam's coral reefs or related studies to increase understanding of the importance of local reefs to communities and provide the Government of Guam with information to build support for coral reef protection and conservation.

- M-Puerto Rico: Projects that assist the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to conduct in-water surveys to determine the extent of impacts from the 2017 hurricanes to coral areas and prioritize where restoration efforts, debris

removal and other actions need to occur.

•M-US Virgin Islands: a) Projects that analyze coral reef mitigation techniques (e.g. the relocation of corals and in-water turbidity curtains) to determine effectiveness of these techniques to help inform permitting decisions as well as compensatory mitigation after events such as ship groundings. b) Projects that pioneer technological advancements in coral reef monitoring such as using remotely operated vehicles and drones.

#### Marine Debris (MD)

•MD-American Samoa: Projects to determine and assess the ecological and toxicological effects of contaminants (e.g. heavy metals and/or the breakdown of plastic materials) leaching from derelict vessels on coral reef ecosystems in American Samoa. Vessels of concern are F/V Seahawk 68, which ran aground on the reef in the Pala Lagoon, a locally-designated Special Management Area, and a ship wrecked at the shoreline edge of the reef flat near the village of Foga'au on the east side of Tutuila.

•MD-Puerto Rico: Projects that assist the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources with the removal of marine debris resulting from the 2017 hurricanes that affected Puerto Rico.

All projects funded through this competition are expected to result in tangible improvements in the condition of coral reef ecosystems. To achieve this outcome, applicants must specify the activities they will undertake as well as the specific outputs, products and outcomes that are expected to result from funded proposals. Specific outputs may include:

a. Support to management authorities in the form of management plans, legislation, regulations or policies, best management practices, communication and outreach tools, and/or applied research aimed at enhancing local capacity to conserve coral reef resources;

b. Environmental data, including recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans and/or atmosphere, as well as correlative data, such as socio- economic data and media (e.g. recordings, photos, videos etc.), and their accompanying metadata files, must comply with standards developed or endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (<http://www.fgdc.gov>); and

c. Other outputs, such as assessments, publications, summary reports, outreach and education materials, and other useful products, that provide resource managers and the public with timely and readily understandable information on coral reefs. These outputs and products should be identified in the original application as described in Section IV(B)4 and must be provided to NOAA at the end of the award period; products of awards may be made

available to the public via NOAA's Coral Reef Information System. As such, all products must be of publishable quality, be written in English unless another language is specified in the application and approved by NOAA, and include appropriate acknowledgement of the support provided by NOAA CRCP.

### C. Program Authority

Authority for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program is provided by Section 6403 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, 16 USC §§ 6401-6409.

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

Pursuant to 16 USC § 6403, and pending Congressional appropriations in FY18 and subsequent years, CRCP expects the funding to range between approximately \$800,000 and \$1,000,000. NOAA will not accept proposals requesting less than \$30,000 or more than \$80,000 in Federal support under this solicitation. NOAA expects that the average award size will be \$50,000 and anticipates approximately 15 awards may be issued.

There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant during the FY18 competitive grant cycle. However, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly differentiate projects and must be successful in the competitive review process. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to the CRCP by Congress. In addition, funding may be divided between the U.S. Pacific and the U.S. Atlantic/Caribbean to meet requirements for geographic distribution of funds as described in the Act.

Attempts will also be made to fund one or more projects in each jurisdiction, provided that the project addresses funding priorities outlined above, is identified as having sufficient merit, and meets all other requirements as stipulated in this solicitation. Funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects.

Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to establish any specific partnership or to obligate available funds for partnership activities. There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this 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, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce (DOC) be responsible for any proposal preparation costs. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive funding.

Proposals not funded in the current fiscal period may be considered for funding in next fiscal year, FY19, without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

#### B. Project/Award Period

Projects with an award period of either 12 or 18 months will be considered for funding under this competition; the requested award start date should begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. Proposals may include an award start date no earlier than August 1, 2018. If an application for a financial assistance is selected for funding, the CRCP has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Additional funding for subsequent years of projects selected in this competition will require submission of a new application, which will compete with other project proposals submitted during subsequent competitions.

#### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Successful applicants will enter into a grant or cooperative agreement with NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program. NOAA expects most of the successful applications will be funded as a grant. The instrument will depend on the level of federal involvement. Federal cooperative agreements are different from traditional grants in that they allow for 'substantial federal involvement' in the implementation of funded projects. Applicants are neither required nor prohibited from proposing substantial Federal involvement in a project, and this will not result in a higher merit review scores. Applications that propose substantial federal government involvement should suggest anticipated federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals. Proposed roles and responsibilities on the part of NOAA or other federal partners may include the activities described in Section III.A, below, including assisting in the implementation of fieldwork and/or laboratory support, and providing Federal data that is not yet publicly available. Regardless of whether an applicant proposes Federal involvement, if a project is selected for funding, NOAA may consider becoming substantially involved by proposing joint collaboration or participation, requiring performance specifications, approving stages of work before subsequent stages may proceed, reviewing substantive aspects of subawards or contracts, involvement in key personnel selection, monitoring to permit redirection of the work due to interrelationships with other projects, significant operational involvement in compliance, or highly prescriptive requirements limiting

recipient discretion on the project scope or management processes, combined with operational involvement.

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.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and local (as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.64, which includes counties, municipalities, and cities) and Indian tribal government agencies are eligible to apply for funding under this funding category. U.S. federal agencies, state, territory, and commonwealth governments and Regional Fishery Management Councils are not eligible to apply under this funding announcement, as NOAA funds their coral reef work in separate programs.

NOAA employees and contractors are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications or write letters of support for any application. However, NOAA CRCP staff is available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities. NOAA or other federal collaboration on applications submitted to this program may only include: 1) providing federally collected data not yet publically available or 2) significant NOAA or Federal staff time to assist with in-water work or laboratory analysis. This does not include attending workshops, playing the role as liaison to connect applicant with other local resource managers, or reviewing documents and, in these cases, NOAA employees may not be listed as project collaborators in the application. If the applicant desires NOAA collaboration on the proposed project, NOAA staff, NOAA employees and contractors may provide a statement confirming the degree and nature of the collaboration. As noted in Section II.C above, NOAA may also propose to become substantially involved in a project selected for funding regardless of whether an applicant proposes substantial Federal involvement. For applications working in National Marine Sanctuaries or with protected species, NOAA employees may provide a statement acknowledging the utility of the proposed work to meet management priorities. Letters of support from NOAA employees and contract staff will be discarded from application materials prior to technical review.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

NOAA CRCP awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies.

Federal funds for any coral conservation project under 16 U.S.C. § 6403(b) may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this Grant Program requires a 1:1 contribution of non-Federal matching funds.

"Cost sharing or matching" is defined by 2 CFR § 200.29 as "the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute)." NOAA will accept any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions of goods and services, will be accepted as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching when they meet all of the following criteria listed in 2 CFR § 200.306(b):

- (1) Are verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records;
- (2) Are not included as contributions for any other Federal award;
- (3) Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;
- (4) Are allowable under Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part;
- (5) Are not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs;
- (6) Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and
- (7) Conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable.

Matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include third party in-kind goods and services such as private boat use and volunteer labor. Goods and services provided by the recipient have the valuation described in 2 CFR 200.306. Federal agencies and employees' in-kind services cannot be considered as part of an applicant's matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from multiple non-federal partners in order to meet the 1:1 match requirement, consistent with the standards described in 2 CFR § 200.306, and if funds are available within the project period stated in the application.

Applicants should specify the source(s) of match in their proposal and detailed budget narrative and may provide or be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to specific projects, and all other cash or third party in-kind contributions.

If the applicant plans to use any federal funds as match, the applicant should identify the federal statute authorizing the program to use federal funds to meet the match or cost sharing requirements.

Applicants may choose to designate part or all of their federally negotiated indirect costs as match. This may be convenient because the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to the “Indirect Costs” policies in Section IV.B.10 and Section IV.F of this announcement.

In addition, any Program Income that may arise in the project may be put toward cost sharing or added to the project, consistent with 2 CFR § 200.307.

The NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements identified in 16 USC § 6403(b)(2):

1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and,
2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

In the case of a waiver request, the applicant should provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match. Match waiver requests, including the appropriate justification, should be submitted as part of the final application. Please address the waiver request as described in Section IV.B.11 of this announcement.

In addition, under 48 USC § 1469a, the DOC has determined that any requirement for local matching funds under \$200,000 (including third party in-kind contributions) to be provided by the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands shall be waived, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Any matching funds otherwise required by law to be provided by government entities of an insular area may be waived at the discretion of the operating unit. Please contact the individual listed in Section VII. Agency Contacts for more information about eligibility for this exemption.

#### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

This section is intentionally left blank.

#### IV. Application and Submission Information

#### A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application forms are available at through the apply function on Grants.gov or <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. For applicants unable to access the application package, it may be requested by contacting the Federal Program Officer and technical point of contact for the CRCP Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants, Elizabeth Fairey. She can be reached at 301-427-8632, or via email at [Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov](mailto:Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov).

#### B. Content and Form of Application

The application process for this grant competition requires submission of a standard NOAA financial Assistance application package on or before the submission date and time listed above. All application materials should use a legible 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. For each application, the information provided in elements 1-6 and 16 (described below) may not exceed 30 pages total; the 30-page limit does not apply to required federal forms and other documentation (elements 7-15 below). Applications that exceed the 30-page limit will be shortened by removing pages before it is forwarded to merit reviewers. Pages excised from lengthy applications will not be reviewed and any activities described therein will not be eligible for funding consideration. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors, may not be understood effectively by the reviewers, leading to lower evaluation scores; so, applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration. Applications submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) should have no more than three attachments in addition to the Federal Forms: 1) Cover page and project narrative (elements 1-4 below), 2) Budget table and detailed budget narrative (element 5), and 3) all additional information (elements 6-10) combined into one file. Applications submitted in electronic format should be either Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) or Microsoft Word files (Adobe Acrobat is the preferred format). The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined shall not exceed 5 megabytes in storage space. Files that are larger than 5 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.

Applications should follow the format described below; failure to follow these requirements may result in the application being eliminated from the competition.

Each application should include the following information:

1. Application Cover Sheet (1-page limit), which includes:
  - a. Applicant organization;
  - b. Applicant name and contact information;

- c. Primary and co-investigators with contact information for the primary and alternate points of contact, including address, phone number, and e-mail address;
- d. Recipient DUNs number (must match application information in SAM.gov)
- e. Project title;
- f. Geographic location of the proposed project;
- g. Amount of Federal funding requested;
- h. Amount of matching funds provided and source of the matching funds;
- i. Requested award start date, which needs to be the first day of the month, end date, which needs to be the last day of the month with an award period of either 12 or 18-months duration. Proposals may include an award start date no earlier than August 1, 2018;
- j. The specific priority or priorities (see Section I(B)) that the proposal will address. If the proposal addresses more than one priority, the applicant must list the priority that most closely reflects the overall objective of the proposal, followed by additional priorities; and
- k. Application summary - a brief, one-paragraph description of the application including an overview of the types of activities that are proposed for funding.

## 2. Project Summary (1-page limit) describing:

- a. Status and magnitude of the issue(s) in the jurisdiction where the project will occur and recent actions undertaken to address the issue(s);
- b. A description of how the project proposes to address the issue;
- c. The partners that will be involved in the project;
- d. A summary of the specific tasks to be accomplished and the proposed approach;
- e. Expected outcomes of the proposed work; and
- f. A description of how performance will be evaluated.

## 3. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative should be the majority of the application and must include a clear and thorough description of the proposed work including a timeline with milestones. Each task must be completely and accurately described. Sufficient detail should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of proposed work to program priorities described in Section I.B. of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed scope of work raises any concerns with regard to federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act. Applicants should clearly describe how the project will directly benefit coral reef management efforts. The elements of a good project narrative include:

- a. Introduction: A brief summary of relevant background information that justifies the need

for the proposed project or task. Identification of the problem/issue the project intends to address and describe its significance to the conservation of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. Identify the specific objective, listed under Section (I)(B), to which the project's objective(s) corresponds. Objectives should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable within the proposed timeframe, the described budget, and the human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment-oriented and identify attainable goals, outcomes, and products.

b. **Project Description:** The project narrative is the scientific or technical plan of activities that are to be accomplished to meet the project objectives, and must be written with sufficient detail to allow a review of suitability of the proposed work and the likelihood of successful completion in the stated timeframe. Please ensure your project narrative includes detailed descriptions of each activity, including the rationale for the activity, how it will be accomplished, specific milestones, and expected products. The narrative must include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also needs to include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the work is one component of a larger project (or the activity is a pilot project for a larger initiative), and proposed activities will continue after the end of the grant period, describe future activities and potential future funding sources (and other mechanisms) to continue the work. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future and how success will be evaluated.

c. **Timeline:** A description of specific activities and associated timelines necessary to meet them. Describe the timelines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2, etc. or 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, etc.), rather than by specific dates.

d. **Program Affected:** List the programs (Federal, state, territorial or local governmental activities) this project would affect and describe how the project coordinates with relevant state, territorial, or local governmental and non-governmental agencies, and if applicable, NOAA activities.

e. **Project Management/Personnel:** Describe how the project will be organized and managed, and include the qualifications of the principal investigator(s) through a summary of professional backgrounds, which may be supplemented by short biographies, curricula vitae, or resumes in Element 6 below, Supporting Documents. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there should be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal

investigator will be responsible for completing the work). Please also include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

#### 4. Table of Products/Outputs and Outcomes

Please provide a table or list to summarize the specific products/outputs and outcomes that will be produced under the award. All products resulting from Federally-funded awards should be provided to NOAA within 90 days of the end of the award period and must be of publishable quality. NOAA may make award products available to the public, so recipients are encouraged to omit sensitive information (i.e., budget or salary information) from products submitted to NOAA. All products must explicitly acknowledge the support of the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program.

For each entry, please provide a description of the product, a working title for the product, the type or format of the product (e.g., journal publication, public service announcement, watershed management plan, presentation, newsletter, metadata record, annual monitoring summary, etc.), and the expected date(s) when the product will be submitted to NOAA. NOAA will use this information to ensure that products are submitted to the agency in a timely manner and made available to the public whenever possible. The information related to each product/output should explain how they will benefit local management of coral reef resources, and describe the performance measures that will be used to evaluate project success. The narrative should also include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future.

#### 5. Project Budget Table and Budget Narrative and Justification

In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a budget table and a detailed budget narrative including a justification for costs. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project narrative for the entire award period. Please explain how categorical costs are derived in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to determine if costs are 'allowable and reasonable' according to the cost principles referenced in 2 CFR § 200, Subpart E. Budget narrative categories should correspond to the standard object class categories listed in Section B of the SF-424A. For additional details, please review the budget guidance provided at:

<http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html>.

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known contracts and subawards and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in the narrative. Describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each subaward should include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:

- Name of qualified subrecipient or contractor, affiliation, and contact. 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 sub award.)
- Method of Selection: A description indicating how the sub recipient was selected. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.
- Period of Performance: Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
- Scope of Work: List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
- Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include reporting schedule.
- Itemized Budget: Include categories used in program budget for subrecipients or contractors.

If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under a subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §§ 200.330-200.332 for subawards, and 2 CFR §§ 200.317-326 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. 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 CFR § 200.33 Equipment, 2 CFR § 200.313, and 2 CFR §§ 200.317-326.

Non-federal applicants should identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or

services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 CFR §§ 200.317-326. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.

The budget narrative should 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 should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for any portion of travel, prior approval is required under the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section K.03.c., <https://go.usa.gov/xRJvv>, and therefore, such travel 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.

Refer to item 10 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative.

The CRCP will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, or travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award, regardless of whether or not an award is received. Such expenditures will not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching funds.

#### 6. Supporting Documents

This section includes the qualifications of the primary project personnel and letters of support received from the relevant jurisdictional representatives, partners, or communities involved in the project. The applicant should provide short biographies or resumes of key personnel. The applicant should provide evidence of support for the project by appropriate representatives of State or other government jurisdictions or letter acknowledging the utility of the work from a National Marine Sanctuary in which the project will be conducted. Letters of collaboration from partners should be included in the application to confirm their participation. Additional letters of support are not required, but are encouraged.

## 7. Permits

It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. Applicants must provide a list of all known permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. You should include this required element even if permits are not required.

Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.

For work proposed within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other federally designated managed areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. For applicants who propose to conduct research or monitoring activities that affect any listed species under the Endangered Species Act, you may need an Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit.

## 8. Data Sharing Plan

a. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

b. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility,

or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

c. Proposal writers are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

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.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html).

Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past. More information about the NOAA Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: [www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php](http://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php)

#### d. Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers

Responsible NOAA official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Liz Fairey Federal Program Officer, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, [Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov](mailto:Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov), 301-427-8632.

**Data Accessibility:** The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NCEI regarding these pending data.

**Technical Recommendations:** The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

**Resources:** NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB). NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate

the pending availability of new data.

#### 9. Match waiver request (if applicable)

Preference under this competition will be given to applicants who provide a 1:1 or greater ratio of matching funds to Federal funds in accordance with the provisions of the Act, 16 U.S.C. § 6403(b). If the proposal lacks sufficient matching funds, the applicant may include a separate document in which the applicant requests a waiver to the matching funds requirement as described in section 16 USC § 6403(b)(2).

Although the CRCP will consider these requests, in most cases, waivers of matching funds will not be provided for applicants to this competition. Please address all waiver requests to Jennifer Koss, CRCP Manager, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, the total amount of matching funds requested to be waived, attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other circumstances preventing the availability of match.

#### 10. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or Facilities and Administrative costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 CFR §§ 200.56-.57 and 2 CFR §§ 200.412-.415.

A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal Government should be included with the application package. If an award recipient has never established an indirect cost rate with any federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR § 200.414. Non-federal entities that have never received a negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rate elect to charge a de minimis rate at 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). The de minimis indirect cost rate should be used for all federal awards. Non-federal entities may use this rate indefinitely, but may choose to negotiate an indirect (F&A) cost rate at any time. This de minimis rate option is not available to state and local governments, and Indian tribes.

If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to establish a new negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award. See Section IV.F.1 for more information on

indirect cost rates and establishing a new indirect cost rate with the DOC.

11. Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance (7/2003 version or newer)

Applicants requesting Federal funding in this program must submit a copy of Standard Form SF-424. If a hard copy final application is submitted, it must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative, and used as the cover page for the final application. An electronic signature and date stamp will automatically be included on SF-424 forms submitted successfully via Grants.gov.

12. Standard Form 424A: Budget Information for Non-construction Programs

Applicants will need to include a separate form for each year of funding and for each proposed sub-award of \$25,000 or more. Applicants are required to submit a SF-424A budget form to summarize the budget for the proposed scope of work. The first column of Sections A and B shows the Federal funds requested, while the second column of Sections A and B shows the non-Federal matching funds provided for the project. Total funding is shown in the final column of section B. Non-federal funding is broken out by source in Section C. Forecasted cash needs in Section D are inclusive of all funding for the project; in the case of an 18-month project, each 'quarter' represents 4.5 months. Both Federal and non-Federal funds must be expended at a similar rate throughout the course of the project. Section E should be left blank. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Please note that completion of the SF-424A form as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF-424A form. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives. All subawards should also be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed subaward budget.

13. Standard Form 424B: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs

At time of application submission, all applicants are required to submit a signed SF- 424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

14. Standard Form CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying

The applicant must also include a completed form CD-511, Certifications Regarding Lobbying.

15. Standard Form LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

If applicable, applicants may be required to disclose lobbying activities by filling out form SF-LLL.

#### 16. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance

As part of the application package, applicants should provide detailed information in the Project Narrative or in the supplementary materials about the location and state of environment in which the activities to be conducted and any environmental concerns. This information should include locations and/or maps showing project sites, species and habitats that may be affected, construction activities, and all other environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, effects on human health and safety, level of controversy of the proposed work, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, impacts to historical or cultural sites, etc.). Under 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 may be required to complete a subset questions (based on activities outlined your application as identified by the Federal Program officer) of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants accessible at <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).

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 216-6A for NEPA, [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative\\_orders/chapter\\_216/216-6A.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-6A.html) and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations

[http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/\\_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf](http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf).

#### C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

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, 31 USC § 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management, which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/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. A 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.

Applicants should allow a minimum of seven days to complete the SAM registration, although complete registration for SAM may take several weeks if problems arise.

Registration is required only once but must be renewed once a year.

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

#### D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications submitted under this competition must be (1) received and validated by [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov); or (2) postmarked or provided to a delivery service that provides a tracking number and receipt on or before the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on February 1, 2018. Regardless of the method of transmission (i.e., mailed in or delivery services), applications received more than 10 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding.

If for any reasons applicants are unable to submit their application through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) or are

concerned about possible problems associated with the Grants.gov system, they may provide a paper copy of their full application by mail. Signed hard copies of applications may be submitted to: Elizabeth Fairey, ATTN: CRCP Domestic Grant Applications, NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC3, 14224, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Applications submitted by mail must include all relevant application elements described in this funding announcement must include a SF-424 form with original ink or valid electronic signature and date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on February 1, 2018; private metered postmarks are not acceptable.

Applicants who submit applications by paper are responsible for tracking their application packages.

#### E. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications submitted under this competition are subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact established as a result of EO 12372. Applicants proposing work in alternate locations are advised to establish whether their application is subject to the EO 12372 prior to submission by reviewing the list of contacts provided at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc).

#### F. Funding Restrictions

##### 1. Indirect Costs

Applicants are permitted to request indirect costs if their organization has an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a federal agency that covers the period of the award. Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package.

If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with any federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR § 200.414, as described in Section IV.B.12 of this Announcement. Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC. The U.S. DOC, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer  
NOAA Grants Management Division

1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910  
Lamar.Revis@noaa.gov

Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees, however indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee. Under 2 CFR § 200.414 “Indirect (F&A) Costs,” any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.403 “Factors affecting allowability of costs.” If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06.

## 2. Ineligible projects

The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or Federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages under Federal or state law; and (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

## 3. Cost Principles

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives and are determined by reference to relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements.

Recipients are subject to the 2 CFR § 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles” and as well as any DOC implementing regulations that may be in effect at the time of award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as the costs are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

## 4. Other

Expenditures on large equipment and/or infrastructure are not a priority for funding under this program.

## G. Other Submission Requirements

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (Grants.gov); and application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the "Apply" function on 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 Universal Numbering System (DUNS) ([www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)) number and be registered in the SAM, and periodic renewals are required.

Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. 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. In addition, it may take two days until the applicant is notified as to whether NOAA received the application, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date.

A recipient's DUNS number must correspond with the recipient's information in Sam.gov. Applicants should allow a minimum of thirty days to receive a DUNS number and to be registered in SAM. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number 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 the application package (forms) and submission directions, and is also where the completed application is submitted.

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 (11.482). 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.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria for this program and their respective weights follow.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (20 points): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. It will assess the intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance the national and jurisdictional coral reef management priorities. Applications will be evaluated on how well the project goals and objectives link to the funding announcement priorities and if there is clear identification of the direct benefits of the project to coral reef conservation. Reviewers will consider:

- The extent in which the proposed work directly addresses national level CRCP/NOAA priorities and/or the relevant jurisdictional management priorities listed in Section 1.B. Program Priorities (0-10 points);and
- The extent in which the potential outcomes, results, or products will directly support conservation and management at the jurisdictional and/or national level; and the degree of collaboration with local, state and territorial governments (0-10 points).

2. Technical and scientific merit (40 points): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications will be scored based on their clear identification of project methods and the suitability of those methods in achieving the stated outcomes, and for evaluating the success or failure of the project in terms of meeting its original goals and objectives. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The completeness and adequacy of detail in the project description and methodology, including a realistic implementation plan achievable in the 12 or 18-month project period, and sufficient detail to allow a NEPA and environmental compliance (Endangered Species Act, Essential Fish Habitat, Historic Preservation, etc.) analysis (0-10 points);
- The overall technical feasibility of the project, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound and uses appropriate methods that are likely to achieve project goals and objectives (0-15points);
- Whether there are effective mechanisms to evaluate project success, including clearly stated

coral reef conservation objectives and goals, the likelihood of meeting milestones and achieving anticipated results specified in the statement of work (0-5 points); and

- The suitability of products including the extent of innovativeness or redundancy with previous work, and the likelihood of producing high quality results and outcomes that benefit coral reef stakeholders and ecosystems. (0-5 points)
- The extent in which the outcomes/products will be disseminated to relevant management agencies, and if applicable, and the intent to disseminate data as indicated in the data management plan. (0-5 points).

3. Overall qualification of applications (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project and administer Federal funds appropriately. The overall qualifications of the project will be evaluated based on:

- The capacity of the applicant and associated project personnel to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing projects that benefit living marine resources. Reviewers will consider awards previously made to the Principal Investigator and any outcomes, results, or products resulting from such awards. Communities and/or organizations submitting their first coral reef conservation project may not be able to document past experience, and therefore will be evaluated on their potential to effectively manage and oversee all project phases and on the basis of their organization's stated mission and the qualifications of the applicant(s) (0-5 points).
- The facilities and/or administrative resources and capabilities available to the applicant to support and successfully manage coral reef conservation projects and administer Federal funds, including the availability of technical expertise to guide the project to a successful completion (0-5 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. The reviewers will evaluate project costs based on:

- The extent in which the applicant demonstrated that a significant impact and benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame. (0-5 points)
- The extent in which applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of project costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF-424A object classes) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications for both federal and non-federal shares. (0-5 points)
- The extent in which applicants are able to secure adequate non-Federal matching funds for

the proposed project, especially those that are able to secure cash contributions, are likely to score higher on this criterion. (0-5 points) The budget will also be evaluated to determine whether the required non-federal match the required 1:1 level (No match or leverage proposed or documented and has not requested a match waiver will be worth 0 points; a match that meets the required 1:1 non-federal match or requests a waiver will be worth 2.5 points; a 1:1 match with strong documentation (securing recipient contributions or cash match is preferred over third-party in-kind contributions of goods or services, or compelling documentation supporting a match waiver) will be worth 5 points. Match or leverage over the 1:1 level may be considered to break ties among applications with equivalent scores).

5. Outreach and education (15 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. This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding conservation of our nation's coral reefs. The reviewers will evaluate:

- Whether information about the project's results will be disseminated to the appropriate user groups to build greater public understanding of threats to coral reef ecosystems and instill a conservation ethic among user groups, and whether the proposed outreach/education methods are appropriate for this type of information; (0-5 points);
- The level of support for the work, as demonstrated by letters from partners and relevant government agencies (0-5 points); and
- The extent to which local partners are involved in project activities including hands-on participation in data collection, restoration, monitoring, and/or education activities, and/or the availability of educational opportunities/trainings to build capacity for future conservation initiatives (0-5 points).

#### B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to assure that it is timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications that meet the minimum requirements will be reviewed by at least three independent peer reviewers with coral reef and/or fisheries management experience during a merit-based review and ranking process. Appropriate mechanisms will be implemented to avoid potential conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. Each reviewer will be asked to individually evaluate and rank proposals using the weighted evaluation criteria above. Proposal evaluations will be based exclusively on information included in the application. Merit reviewer ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

Applications may also be provided to the respective government management agency (e.g.,

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Point of Contact, regional fishery management council, National Marine Sanctuary, etc.) from the jurisdiction where the proposed project will occur for further review. The management agency personnel will be asked to prioritize proposals and provide comments on all applications submitted for work in their jurisdiction. This is to enhance coordination of coral reef conservation activities in each jurisdiction and to ensure proposed activities are appropriate and do not duplicate other efforts. Applicants are encouraged to coordinate with State and Territorial point of contact agencies prior to submission of their applications in order to obtain letters of support from relevant management authorities.

The Selecting Official or their designee may negotiate the funding level or other major aspects of the proposal, and the Selecting Official will make the final recommendation for award based on the rank order and selection factors below (Section V.C.) to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award. Hence, awards may not necessarily be made in rank order.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, project start date, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD), and Office for Coastal Management officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with NEPA and other legislation.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a

proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

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 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 Sections I (A and B) of this announcement;
- 5. Applicant's prior award performance;
- 6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups; and
- 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 NOAA Grants Officer.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA anticipates that grants or cooperative agreements under this competition will have a start date no earlier than August 1, 2018 dependent on funding availability, the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, including NEPA analysis, environmental compliance, permit requirements, and the other provisions of other supporting documents as requested. NOAA expects that successful applicant will be notified prior to their start date.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final section package has been approved by the GMD, which is expected to be approximately September 30, 2018. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the GMD by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant should be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

The official notice of award is the Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. The CD-450 award cover page is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

The DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xRJvv>. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov>.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

## B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

### 1. Department of Commerce-Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants

The DOC 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. Uniform Administrative Requirements

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 CFR Part 200, adopted by the DOC through 2 CFR § 1327.101, applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

### 3. Terms and Conditions

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports. See <https://go.usa.gov/xRJvv>.

### 4. Limitation of Liability

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of continuing Congressional appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any

available funds.

NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 CFR 200.338-.342, Remedies for Non-compliance, 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 as described in 2 CFR 200.339.

#### 5. National Environmental Policy Act

As described in Section IV.B., NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500\\_1508.pdf](http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

#### 6. Data Sharing Requirements

See the Data Sharing information in Section IV.B. of this announcement.

#### 7. Unpaid or Delinquent Tax Liability

When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding

Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law. If a form is provided, an award may not be issued until it is returned and accepted by NOAA.

#### 8. Minority Serving Institutions

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

#### C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR §§ 200.327-.329 and the DOC Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request.

A comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 90 days of the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include statement on the front of all products indicate the material "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited. If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publication must be made available to the public free of charge.

All products must be of publishable quality, and include a citation and appropriate acknowledgement of the support provided by CRCP, because products may be made available to the public via the Coral Reef Information System (<http://coris.noaa.gov>), it is the recipient's responsibility to ensure that products are professionally written and edited; they do not contain sensitive financial information; and that media products are 508 compliant (<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?fuseAction=stdsSum>). Except where limited by law,

regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications should be made available to the public free of charge.

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. In their final progress report, applicants will be asked to a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project with respect to coral reef conservation; 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."

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory in accordance with OMB guidance that Commerce adopted by regulation at 2 CFR.1327.101, which shall be incorporated under the award. The equipment requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance are set out at 2 CFR Part 200.313.

Recipients must inventory tangible property at least once every two years and at award closeout. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must submit reports at least annually and at award closeout on the status of real property in which the federal government retains an interest, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

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 "Submit Additional Closeout Documents" as an award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards

over \$25,000. See 2 CFR 170 at [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl).

## VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the competition manager: Liz Fairey. She can be reached by phone at 301-427- 8632, by fax at 301-713-1594, by email at [Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov](mailto:Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov) or by mail at: Liz Fairey, NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC3, 14224, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

## VIII. Other Information

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200, codified by the DOC at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the DOC in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by DOC employees, other Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with DOC and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a DOC financial assistance award.

In addition, DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set

forth rules for the DOC regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the DOC will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn.

Applicants shall not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files may not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

The paper copy submission process is an option for applicants in remote island or office locations and for those who do not have access to the Internet.

The federal program office has a process to review for completeness. Administrative reviews generally take place after deadlines because the majority of applicants apply just before deadlines. If there are no time constraints and available resources, the federal agency may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete packages.