



CLIMATE RESILIENCE REGIONAL CHALLENGE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1. Under what authority is NOAA providing these funds?**
A: Section 40001 of the Inflation Reduction Act (Public Law 117-169); Section 310 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1456c), titled “Technical Assistance;” the Digital Coast Act (Public Law 116-223); the National Climate Program Act (Public Law 95-367); and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, Public Law 117-58).
- 2. Are these awards being made as grants or cooperative agreements?**
A: Cooperative agreements, as described in 31 U.S.C. 6305 and 2 C.F.R. 200.1, meaning NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards.
- 3. Will NOAA be issuing additional funding opportunities through the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge?**
A: This grant program is being funded through a single appropriation from the Inflation Reduction Act (Section 40001) and there will only be one competition.



4. How are these funding opportunities different from the other habitat conservation and restoration funding opportunities NOAA is providing through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law?

A: Funding from both the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act contribute to NOAA's Climate-Ready Coasts initiative. NOAA is making transformational project-level investments in restoration and conservation under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law through several opportunities, including our Transformational Habitat Conservation and Resilience Grants, funds targeted to our coastal zone management and National Estuarine Research Reserve programs, and through the National Coastal Resilience Fund, which NOAA administers in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The Climate Resilience Regional Challenge will fund a broader, more holistic range of adaptation actions that include, but are not limited to, a focus on restoration and conservation. The challenge also adds its unique focus on building enduring capacity for resilience and adaptation within and across regional networks. The actions anticipated under this program, such as policy and regulatory changes and increasing local capacity, extend beyond the focus, and in some cases, the geographic scale, of the opportunities under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and are expected to be complementary and deliver compounding benefits. The investments in capacity-building and regional collaboration, and emphasis on underserved communities, tribes, and others, will help build an even stronger pipeline of projects that can be supported through the National Coastal Resilience Fund, Community Based Restoration Program, and Coastal Zone Management Act programs, over the long term.

5. How is the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge different from the National Coastal Resilience Fund?

A: The [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#) is a public-private partnership administered by NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This grant funding helps restore, increase, and strengthen natural infrastructure, which in turn protects coastal communities and enhances fish and wildlife habitat. The Climate Resilience Regional Challenge funds a broader range of adaptation actions and supplements investments being made through the National Coastal Resilience Fund. There are no restrictions on submitting proposed efforts to multiple funding opportunities.

6. How is the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge different from the Climate-Ready Workforce funding opportunity?

A: The Climate Resilience Regional Challenge is broadly focused on advancing local adaptation efforts in coastal regions through regional coordination and on-the-ground project implementation. The [Climate-Ready Workforce](#) focuses on end-to-end recruitment into high quality jobs that enhance climate resilience by leveraging cross-sector partnerships, relevant training, and wraparound services (such as transportation and stipends). Projects funded under Climate-Ready Workforce will measurably increase the number of skilled professionals supporting equitable, local adaptation efforts, including those funded by the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge and other Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act investments. There are no restrictions on submitting proposed efforts to multiple funding opportunities.

7. Please clarify the differences among these funding opportunities:

- a. [NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge](#) is the broadest funding opportunity with the most flexibility among the current climate resilience funding opportunities at NOAA.
- b. The [NOAA Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience for Underserved Communities](#), [NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration](#), and the [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#) are all funding opportunities that are primarily focused on restoration of habitat on land with ecological value for threatened and endangered species.
- c. The [Climate-Ready Workforce](#) is primarily focused on workforce development.
- d. The [Ocean-Based Climate Resilience Accelerators](#) funding opportunity supports business accelerators for small businesses and entrepreneurs to commercialize products and services that advance climate resilience.
- e. [NOAA Climate Program Office Climate Adaptation Partnerships \(CAP\)/Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments \(RISA\)](#) program has a substantial focus on research (the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge does not). In contrast, the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge focuses on adaptation planning and implementation of on-the-ground activities, like construction of natural infrastructure.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Who is eligible?

8. Who is eligible to apply?

A: Eligible entities include coastal states or territories, counties, cities, or other political subdivisions of a coastal state, including special purpose units of a coastal state or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities (e.g., special use districts); the District of Columbia; institutions of higher education; and public or private non-profit organizations or associations, including those acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a coastal state, regional councils of government, regional planning councils, and metropolitan planning organizations. Tribes (tribal governments) and tribal organizations are eligible. Institutions of higher education (as defined in subsection [a] of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 1001(a)]) are eligible.

9. Can you apply as a network, coalition, or alliance if you are not an established entity but you have a fiscal sponsor?

A: Yes, new and existing regional scale collaborative efforts are encouraged to apply, whether or not they are a legal entity. If the network, coalition, or alliance is not a legal entity, a fiscal sponsor can apply on behalf of the group. Networks, coalitions, and alliances can request funding in either Track One or Track Two to establish themselves as a legal entity.

10. Which states are considered coastal?

A: Coastal states are defined in the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1453[4]) as any state of the United States in, or bordering on, the Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, Long Island Sound, or one or more of the Great Lakes. The District of



Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and former Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (Freely Associated States), including Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau, are eligible.

11. My community is in a coastal state, but we are not right on the coast. Are we eligible?

A: There is no prohibition against any community in any coastal state from participating in any proposed effort. All communities in all coastal states are eligible. However, applicants should closely review the evaluation criteria to determine how the proposed effort will be evaluated. For example, letters of intent will be scored on the “extent the proposed effort prepares the region for implementation of future actions and/or directly reduces risk to coastal communities, infrastructure, economies, and ecosystems from weather and climate impacts.” The stronger the economic, social, and/or environmental benefits to coastal communities and/or coastal ecosystems, the more likely it is that the project will be evaluated favorably.

12. Are activities outside of the United States eligible?

A: No. Foreign governments are not eligible to apply for funding. International non-governmental organizations are eligible to participate as partners (either funded or unfunded) if they are conducting projects in one or more of the eligible coastal states and territories.

13. Are other federal agencies allowed to receive funds?

A: Federal agencies and employees (including the Department of Defense) are not allowed to receive funds, but may serve as collaborative partners. If federal agencies are partners, applicants are expected to provide details in the application regarding the planned level of federal engagement. Examples may include, but are not limited to, serving in a review capacity, providing technical assistance, and participating in task teams, work groups, and leadership teams.

14. Can funds be used for activities on Army and Navy bases?

A: Activities can take place on military bases; however, funds cannot be provided to federal agencies, including the Department of Defense.

15. Can the same organization be awarded both Track One and Track Two funding for two different projects?

A: Yes, the same organization can submit separate letters of intent for different projects and be selected for funding under the same or different tracks. The selection factors described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity allow NOAA to distribute the funds across a diverse range of locations for a diverse range of purposes. If both proposals score highly, and both projects have similar geographic and topical focus, it would be less likely that both projects would be selected for funding.

16. Are both federally and non-federally recognized tribes eligible?

A: Yes. Federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations are eligible. Non-federally recognized tribes are eligible if they are non-profit organizations. The term “tribe” is

synonymous with “tribal government” and means any American Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, community, component band, or component reservation, individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of the date of enactment of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (25 U.S.C. 5131). The term “tribal organization” means the recognized governing body of any Indian tribe; any legally established organization of American Indians that is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by such governing body, or is democratically elected by the adult members of the American Indian community to be served by such organization, and which includes the maximum participation of American Indians in all phases of its activities (25 U.S.C. 5304). While tribal organizations are eligible to apply on behalf of one or more tribes, they must document tribal approval prior to commencing proposed activities (per 25 U.S.C. 5304). Non-profit organizations are eligible to apply, including state-recognized tribes, Native Hawaiian entities, or other non-profit organizations serving the needs of Indigenous Peoples.

17. Are Alaska Native corporations eligible to apply?

A: Yes, Alaska Native corporations are eligible for this competition.

What is eligible?

18. Can Track Two be used for both planning and implementation of projects? For construction activities, is there any preference for or discouragement against proposing efforts to plan, design, permit, and construct if it can be completed in the five years?

A: The primary focus of Track Two is on implementation, but all activities allowed under Track One (regional scale coordination, engagement, planning, advancement of equitable outcomes, and capacity-building) can also be conducted under Track Two. Construction and any other proposed activities, regardless of where the applicant is starting, must be implemented within five years, which is the maximum duration of our grants. There is no preferential consideration of ambitious efforts; however, the “Scientific and Technical Merit” evaluation criteria for this funding opportunity assess whether the proposed activities are achievable within the identified time frame and offer a realistic timeline.

19. If a restoration project has a gray component, is that eligible?

A: Yes, NOAA will support gray components of projects that reduce flood risk and are part of a broader effort to restore ecosystem services. Applicants should describe the need for integrating gray components in the context of the overall effort. This program is not intended to be a source of funding for deferred maintenance of current storm water conveyance systems. It is of utmost importance to explain the context around the investment and how the investment will provide risk reduction and additional co-benefits. The applicant should ensure that the request aligns with NOAA’s mission and describe the coastal benefits of the investment.

20. Do restoration projects have to be done on property that the applying organization owns?

A: No. The restoration project must be located on publicly owned land, tribal land, or land where a public entity holds a lease or easement which shall, at a minimum, be for the expected life of the project.

21. Do projects have to be put on public lands, or can they be placed on private property? Do state managed submerged lands qualify even if the adjacent upland is privately owned?

A: All construction activities must be located on publicly owned land, tribal land, or land where a public entity holds a lease or easement which shall, at a minimum, be for the expected life of the project (as defined by the project applicant and NOAA, but for a minimum of 20 years). NOAA will review leases and easements to ensure that the public interest is adequate and consistent with competition requirements. Activities on state managed submerged lands are eligible even if adjacent uplands are privately owned.

22. Can funds be used to support restoration activities on land held in easement by a federal agency?

A: Yes. However, funding for these activities cannot be provided to federal agencies.

23. Can a Track Two proposal incorporate some elements of Track One activities if the majority of the work is focused on Track Two activities?

A: Yes, any eligible activity for Track One funding is eligible for Track Two.

24. Are one- and two-year length proposed projects eligible?

A: Yes. Applicants shall not propose actions that will take longer than five years to complete, but can propose actions for any amount of time less than five years.

25. Are there any activities that cannot be funded through this program?

A: The placement of sand on beaches for renourishment is not eligible for funding under this announcement. In addition, the construction of shoreline stabilization structures is not eligible for funding under this announcement, unless they are part of a hybrid green and gray adaptation action. Shoreline stabilization structures are hard structures used to create rigidity and include breakwaters, riprap, jetties, breakwaters, seawalls, and revetments.

The following activities will also not be considered for federal funding: 1) activities that alleviate the liability associated with legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state, or federal law; 2) activities that constitute compensatory restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state, or local law; and 3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute, or regulation.

26. Will NOAA pay for demolition of structures on acquired lands during the performance period? Or will they not pay for demolition generally?

A: NOAA will fund demolition of structures as part of an adaptation action that restores ecosystem services on lands held in conservation and the applicant can demonstrate risk reduction and public benefits.

27. Are contaminated land clean-up activities for lands not covered under EPA's 128(a) brownfields program or similar federal programs allowable under this program?

A: Possibly. Any applicant considering remediation or clean-up activities should request a consultation with NOAA prior to submitting an application. NOAA may consider supporting minor remediation activities which are part of a broader effort to restore ecosystem services or develop natural infrastructure on land acquired with funding from this program.

28. Can facilities (e.g., labs) for water monitoring be constructed under Track Two?

A: Construction of new facilities is not an eligible activity.

29. Is the strategic placement of dredged sediment eligible for funding in Track Two?

A: Constructed nature-based solutions are eligible. This could include subaqueous or terrestrial placement of sediment as part of a nature-based solution (e.g., dunes, living shorelines, horizontal levees). Placement of sand on beaches solely for renourishment is ineligible.

30. Would a proposal be competitive if the majority of the requested funding is for the collection of geospatial data?

A: The percentage of funding dedicated to any one type of activity is not considered in the evaluation criteria. To be competitive, projects must be responsive to all of the program priorities (e.g., risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, enduring capacity).

31. Would sensor networks and associated cyber-infrastructure be eligible (along with community engagement)? What about social survey data?

A: Yes, they would be eligible. If local jurisdiction(s) need information for decision-making that is contingent upon data from the proposed sensor network, and the decision(s) made with that data would reduce risk, then it would be an eligible activity. NOAA will be evaluating activities to see if the application of any acquired data directly supports one of the competition's four priorities (e.g., as risk reduction). If that information is being collected to primarily support research, the activity may not be a good fit for this program.

32. Which track would mapping activities fall under (i.e., tsunami inundation mapping, shoreline erosion mapping, lidar acquisition, mapping wildfire induced landslides and debris flows)?

A: Mapping activities that support regional collaborative building and resilience strategy development could be appropriate for both Track One and Track Two. Mapping activities that support implementation could be appropriate for Track Two.

33. Could you include working with farmers to promote regenerative and climate resilient farming practices as part of a suite of other resilience and restoration related activities?

A: Yes. Actions involving agricultural practices should clearly articulate how those changes reduce risk, as well as the benefits that would flow to coastal communities.

34. Would a sub-grant competition for local governments to implement natural infrastructure projects that are consistent with a county-wide flood resilience plan be eligible?

A: Applicants can pass through funding to other entities as contracts or sub-awards as long as the activities are completed within the period of performance and address the program priorities. However, these funds are not considered block grants and applicants should clearly describe the intentions, expected outcomes, and processes for distributing funds in the application.

35. Can there be a hybrid of ready-to-go projects and projects that are currently in the planning process that will be ready to go later in the grant period (but maybe not identifiable right now in application)?

A: Applicants can propose a suite of actions, some of which are ready for implementation, and others that are not finalized. Reviewers will evaluate the risk reduction benefits of proposed actions, and it may be difficult to evaluate undeveloped or undefined projects. We encourage all applicants to clearly describe all proposed actions with enough specificity that reviewers can understand how they will reduce risk. Applications that do not specifically identify risk reduction benefits may not be reviewed as favorably as those that have more clear outcomes. Applicants should be as clear and specific about the intended outcomes as they can.

36. Is NOAA willing to fund new infrastructure that reduces land-based sources of pollution, as well as actions that are maintenance of existing investments that help green infrastructure that reduces land-based sources of pollution?

A: Planning and construction of natural infrastructure that reduces weather and climate impacts is an eligible activity under Track Two, as well as pursuing hybrid green (natural) and gray (structural projects). Maintenance of existing green infrastructure projects is eligible; however, it may not be competitive if there are not additional risk reduction benefits included in the proposal.

37. Could a plan for the management of publicly owned bluffs be eligible for Track One?

A: Yes, planning is an eligible activity in Track One and Track Two. To be competitive, the proposed activities must align with the program priorities (risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, enduring capacity). NOAA would expect the planning effort to be at a regional scale, responsive to known climate risks, include engagement with disadvantaged communities, and complement other related activities to move communities closer to implementation of resilience and adaptation actions.

38. Can Track One funding be used to develop a regional resilience “master plan” with various planning and engagement actions related to climate change adaptation efforts?

A: Yes, that is an eligible use of funds under either track.

39. Can you tell us more about the eligibility of resilience hubs using existing infrastructure? Can we retrofit aging infrastructure to be more climate resilient while improving access to critical climate resilience services (e.g., wildfire and flood response) as part of a resilience hub concept?

A: An existing public facility that needs retrofitting to be able to serve as a resilience hub would be an eligible activity.

40. Do supported resilient hubs have to be at public facilities?

A: Resilience hubs in existing facilities should be located in places community members trust, find welcoming, and can access conveniently. The facility should be resilient and provide services before, during, and after an event. Funding under this solicitation can be used for operating costs associated with the resilience hub. Regardless of whether the facility is owned by a public or a non-profit entity, funding recipients must have a lease for the expected life of the proposed resilience hub, and the facility must provide public access for the duration of the lease. Construction of new facilities is not eligible for funding under this competition.

41. Would coastal tribal hatcheries be eligible under Track Two funding?

A: Tribes and tribal organizations are eligible to apply. Specific activities related to tribal hatcheries may or may not be eligible. For example, construction of new facilities and/or buildings is not an eligible activity. However, the construction of natural or hybrid green and gray infrastructure to protect tribal fish hatcheries would be eligible. Applicants interested in tribal hatcheries should consider NOAA's Inflation Reduction Act programs related to Climate Resilient Fisheries and Tribal Priorities. More information can be found on the NOAA Inflation Reduction Act website.

42. Is the hiring of personnel to manage and implement proposed activities an eligible use of funds?

A: Yes, costs associated with hiring full- and part-time employees is an eligible activity. NOAA expects many applicants will need to increase staffing to ensure successful implementation of proposed activities. Associated costs should be minimized to the greatest extent practicable.

43. Would the relocation of a sewer pump station in a floodplain be eligible for Track Two? This would affect one jurisdiction, but not necessarily an entire region.

A: Proposals that do not address all four program priorities (risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, enduring capacity) are not likely to score well. NOAA encourages applicants to bundle activities into an integrated suite of regional resilience actions that ensure benefits at the community level while collectively addressing the program priorities. To be eligible, any proposed activity that includes retrofit or construction of infrastructure must include green (natural) features. For additional information on green and gray infrastructure approaches, please refer to the Digital Coast natural infrastructure resources page and USACE Engineering with Nature website. Technical assistance with natural infrastructure can be requested by emailing resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov.

44. What types of educational activities are eligible for funding in either track?

A: Professional education and training activities are encouraged to address the enduring capacity priority. Other education-related activities (e.g., fellowships, internships) are eligible and are encouraged to support workforce development efforts. Education activities that do not directly support the program priorities of building enduring capacity for adaptation and resilience or contributing to workforce development are not likely to score well.

45. Would creating multi-agency teaming agreements and capacity development for emergency management in coastal regions be considered eligible for these grants?

A: Yes, this sounds like a workforce development activity that would contribute to building enduring capacity for resilience in the region.

46. Can a waterfront resilience and public access project include pedestrian connections from the waterfront to downtown?

A: Yes, applicants should seek to design projects that provide co-benefits. For example, the construction of a greenway that reduces the risk of flooding could also have bike and pedestrian trails that provide public health, transportation, recreation, and climate mitigation co-benefits.

47. Are efforts to support building code and energy code adoption eligible?

A: Yes, efforts to support the development and adoption of standards, codes, and policies that advance coastal resilience are eligible for Track One and Track Two.

48. Will regional challenge awards fund historic building restoration?

A: Yes, if the building is publicly-owned it would be eligible for improvements if it is planned to support residents before, during, or after hazard events. A restoration for historic preservation purposes only would not be eligible.

49. Can these funds be used for prioritizing historical or sacred sites from sea level rise?

A: Yes, this is an eligible use of funds under either track.

50. Is the capitalization of a revolving loan fund or other type of fund that provides grants for climate resilience an eligible activity for Track Two?

A: Yes, the capitalization of public revolving loan funds or other types of grant-making funds that support climate resilience activities are eligible. Any funds that are passed through as sub-awards must comply with all relevant federal regulations. All proposed activities must be completed within the period of performance of the federal award.

51. Is the development of new forecast models for flood risk assessment eligible within Track One?

A: Climate risk and vulnerability assessments are eligible Track One activities. Applicants could propose a new forecast model if it is necessary to complete a risk assessment, and should describe why the new model is needed. Applicants proposing the development of new tools and models should review the evaluation criteria to ensure associated costs are necessary and reasonable.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

52. How are regional collaboratives defined? Could a network of coastal partners in locations that are far away propose together?

A: Regional collaboratives are defined as groups composed of collaborators and partners that are unified by a common vision for how to significantly increase the resilience of their identified region. All collaborators and partners do not need to be located in the identified region, but all of them should have a clear, shared sense of the need for action and willingness to engage in a collaborative process that links diverse interests to achieve shared goals in a regional setting. Regional collaboratives must identify the geography that they represent and should be led by or include locally oriented institutions and governments. Applicant-defined regions must be in coastal states and territories. The places and communities within the region should face similar weather and climate impacts, share adjacent and/or overlapping geographical interests or administrative boundaries, or benefit from the same natural, social, economic, or infrastructure systems. Collaborators and partners are not required to be physically located in coastal states, and while there can only be one applicant, there is no limit on the number of collaborative partners for a grant.

53. Does NOAA expect applicants to establish regional collaboratives similar to the ones on the program website?

A: The regional collaboratives referenced in the program website are meant to serve as examples. Applicants should determine the most appropriate form and function needed to address the program priorities in their respective region. Applicants to Track One should come together as a regional collaborative to develop a unified vision for increasing resilience at a regional scale. Applicants for Track Two funding may be a regional collaborative as defined for Track One, or the applicant can be a single entity. Regardless, all entities interested in applying for Track Two funding should be committed to working closely with relevant partners, including representatives of marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities.

54. Does an applicant have to be a regional collaborative to apply?

A: A regional collaborative is a group of individuals or entities with a unified vision for resilience that can apply to this funding opportunity together, and may or may not be a legal entity. Applicants can apply for funding to develop and/or enhance existing regional collaboratives under either track. Applicants to Track One must either be an existing regional collaborative or propose to develop a new collaborative. Applicants to Track Two are not required to be a regional collaborative. All applicants to both tracks should strive for significant collaboration at a regional scale that is inclusive of tribes and/or disadvantaged communities.

55. How can already established collaboratives leverage this opportunity?

A: Established collaboratives can apply for Track One or Track Two. Within Track One, they can request funds to expand engagement, coordination and collaboration, advance adaptation planning efforts to include new geographies and/or sectors, and develop capacity-building activities—among other eligible activities described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity listed on pages nine and 10. Within Track Two, they can continue to support and expand the efforts of the collaborative at the same time they receive funding for implementing adaptation actions.

56. Are there any required outcomes or products for new or existing collaboratives applying to Track One?

A: No, there are no required outcomes or products. However, within two years of receiving funding, the applicants should be able to demonstrate that a regional collaborative effort is functional, and progress toward implementation is being made. The Notice of Funding Opportunity includes examples of outcomes or products that would reflect progress.

57. Can funding under Track One support one grant for multiple regional collaboratives, and include activities to build bridges between regions?

A: Yes, as long as each regional collaborative can achieve significant, tangible resilience and adaptation outcomes for their region with the funding available from NOAA. NOAA encourages all applicants, whether proposing efforts to initiate or support single or multiple regional collaboratives, to ensure the proposed activities address the program priorities (risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, enduring capacity), facilitate the implementation of regional resilience actions, and ensure benefits at the community level. Activities to transfer knowledge to other regions are also encouraged. Applicants may propose the majority of activities in one region and activities to transfer knowledge to one or multiple regions.

58. I am interested in applying for funding, but I only have one specific activity in mind. I am looking for partners to propose similar or related efforts in a regional context. Who can help me find potential partners?

A: The Office for Coastal Management can provide technical assistance during the application phase, and can connect applicants with NOAA partners and other regional contacts. Applicants can send an email to request assistance to resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov.

59. How large or small can a region be?

A: The applicant-specified region should be of a size and scope that can facilitate the implementation of resilience and adaptation actions at a regional scale and provide direct benefits to local communities. Regions could range from within a single municipality to multiple coastal jurisdictions in several states. Within a defined region, the places and communities should face similar weather and climate impacts, share adjacent or overlapping geographical interests or administrative boundaries, or benefit from the same natural, social, economic, or infrastructure systems. The region must be in eligible coastal states and territories, and there is no specific minimum or maximum size by geographic distance or number of jurisdictions. Regions may be made up of or include tribal lands, and NOAA encourages applications that benefit tribal lands or tribal priorities. Applicants should be able to demonstrate, with the amount of funding requested from NOAA, significant, tangible resilience and adaptation outcomes that benefit the specified region as a whole and individual coastal communities.

60. What types of weather and climate impacts can be addressed by proposed projects? Does an applicant need to focus on impacts of both extreme weather and climate change?

A: The impacts of drought, extreme heat, sea level rise, floods, wildfires, and other future weather and climate impacts can be addressed through this program. For all proposals to both tracks, the greater the benefits to coastal populations, ecosystems, and economies, the more likely the proposal is to score well. Applicants are not required to focus on both weather and climate impacts; one or both are sufficient.

61. Would urban air quality be considered as a major concern here or not?

A: Poor urban air quality resulting from climate change could be addressed through this funding opportunity. For example, actions that address air quality impacts from wildfires or drought and provide benefits to coastal communities would be within the scope of this program.

62. Are actions to address impacts of changing ocean temperature eligible?

A: Actions that address changing ocean temperature from climate change and that provide benefits to coastal communities would be within scope of the program.

63. Because climate change is increasing the risk of both extreme drought and floods in some coastal areas, could this program fund projects designed to deal with both drought and flood?

A: Yes, this funding competition would be appropriate for those multi-hazard resilience projects.

64. Is NOAA interested in funding technology-based solutions for climate resiliency, or is the focus more on funding conservation projects?

A: The answer is both. Geospatial data services and collection and decision-support tools are examples of eligible technology-based interventions. NOAA is also interested in supporting restoration efforts that improve ecosystems. Consider the regional context and the vision for resilience in selecting approaches.

65. Is there scope in the challenge to include innovation and entrepreneurial-support organizations working to empower underrepresented climate innovators?

A: While specific activities may be eligible, they may be a better fit for the Ocean-Based Climate Accelerators funding opportunity that was recently released. More information is available here: ioos.noaa.gov/about/governance-and-management/inflation-reduction-act/accelerators.

66. Can Track One activities include scientific investigations into resilience evaluation and enhancement?

A: The NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge does not support research activities. However, the development and implementation of performance measurement, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms are eligible. If innovative approaches to performance measurement are proposed, the primary purpose should support the program priorities (risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, enduring capacity), and not for the sole purpose of conducting research.

67. Can funding for research be included if it supports one of the implementation actions?

A: The NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge can provide funding for science related activities (e.g., laboratory testing, generating new climate information) if those activities directly support a proposed activity that addresses a program priority. This funding opportunity should not be used for the sole purpose of conducting research. For example, conducting lab tests to identify the best specimens to plant as part of a restoration project would be eligible. In contrast, establishing a long-term research program for the purpose of improving understanding of various species for use in future restoration efforts would likely not be eligible. While NOAA is interested in supporting innovative approaches, the primary purpose is supporting actions that achieve the program priorities (risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity, enduring capacity), and not for conducting research. Applicants should be sure that the connections between proposed activities, including research, and proposed outcomes are clear.

68. Development of decision-support tools seems more appropriate for Track One. If we have a proposal that lives between these two tracks, how should we proceed? Would projects to develop decision-support tools with communities be considered, or is implementation of projects the priority?

A: Yes, decision-support tools for communities will be considered under both tracks, as they can build capacity for decision-making. However, NOAA would not anticipate a proposal that is primarily focused on developing a tool as the outcome to be competitive. Applicants should consider bundling tools with other activities to fully address program priorities.

69. Is this program concerned with social and cultural impacts of climate change in coastal areas, or just economic and environmental factors? If so, is there a preference for addressing either or all?

A: NOAA is concerned with climate change impacts to people, the economy, and the environment. Adaptation actions to address climate impacts on social and cultural systems, as well as on natural systems and the economy, are encouraged. There is no additional weight given to any specific type of climate impact, and all applicants should ensure risk reduction outcomes are tangible and measurable.

70. What types of scientific expertise and services does NOAA have that applicants can leverage to build climate resilience in coastal communities?

A: NOAA's programs and network of partners collectively provide a broad range of scientific expertise and services related to climate adaptation for coastal areas. National-scale platforms like NOAA's [Digital Coast](#) and the [U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#) provide free online access to NOAA and other partner resources, including adaptation-related data, tools, training, case studies, and scientific reports. In addition, NOAA has a network of regional, state, and place-based programs that support climate adaptation in coastal areas. To request additional assistance with identifying specific expertise and resources specific to your region and needs, email resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov.

71. What is the criteria for funding wastewater treatment plants?

A: Projects need to support the competition's four priorities. If the activity is related to reducing climate risk of an existing wastewater treatment plant that is a critical facility for a region, then it would be eligible. Planning for relocation would be eligible, but the costs for construction of new facilities is not.

72. Regarding our proposed workforce training described in our letter of intent: is training 40 DAC fellows at a four-year university in climate resilience work that NOAA has in mind, or are you looking for training leading to direct hiring by our subcontractors, or others, working specifically on coastal adaptation projects?

A: Per the notice of funding opportunity (page 11), if the activity is framed as workforce development it should reflect Department of Commerce best practices. Please be sure to review the enduring capacity evaluation criteria.

73. Will letters of intent with a focus on building a regional community resilience through education or workforce development be competitive?

A: The most competitive projects will address all four program priorities. A proposal focused on regional community resilience education or workforce development would likely be a better fit for the Climate-Ready Workforce funding opportunity, which can be found here: seagrant.noaa.gov/CRW.

FULL APPLICATION PROCESS

74. Has the public announcement been made? If not, when is that anticipated?

A: The Office for Coastal Management notified successful applicants on October 13, 2023. NOAA will not make a public announcement of applicants who were selected to submit applications.

75. Can you provide the split of the 120 letters selected? How many were Track 1 vs Track 2?

A: NOAA selected 61 Track One and 59 Track Two letters of intent to submit full applications.

76. Will NOAA designate a point of contact for each region for questions and assistance throughout the process?

A: For more information or to ask questions, contact NOAA at resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov. The program team will engage regional staff directly. Meetings with applicants will include regional NOAA staff.

77. Will applicants receive individual feedback regarding any activities of concern included within the letter of intent, or is the attachment/table the only information provided?

A: If an applicant has concerns about activities within their letter of intent, they should reach out to NOAA to discuss those activities.

78. Can one entity (or applicant) be included in multiple applications?

A: Yes, any eligible entity can serve as lead for or participate in multiple applications. Applicants should carefully consider whether they have the capacity to execute multiple efforts concurrently.

79. I need help with my application on *Grants.gov*. Can NOAA help me?

A: NOAA does not operate the application submission process on *Grants.gov*. We recommend you review the resources available at *Grants.gov*, including the [support section](#) and [applicant FAQs](#). Applicants may also direct their *Grants.gov*-related questions to support@grants.gov, or call the *Grants.gov* help desk: (800) 518-4726 (open 24/7 except on federal holidays).

80. Do all subcontracting organizations need to register for *Grants.gov*, SAMs, etc.?

A: Subawardees must register in *Sam.gov*. They do not have to register to use the other systems (e.g., *Grants.gov*, eRA).

81. If you are applying through your fiscal sponsor, do you or the fiscal sponsor register with eRA?

A: The prime recipient, also commonly referred to as the fiscal sponsor or lead entity, must ensure they are registered with eRA. Collaborators receiving subawards do not need to register.

82. Can you send us the link to register for eRA?

A: Please see the resources on the grant program's website: eRA.nih.gov. A [video](#) is available to help with this registration process.

83. Are the required forms only for construction activities?

A: No, budget forms are required for both non-construction (SF-424 A) and construction (SF-424 C) activities. The primary applicant must submit one SF-424A for the entire project, and every sub-award must have its own SF-424A or SF-424C if the sub-award is a construction project.

84. Can you provide some clarity to whether Track One and Track Two proposals are competing against each other? If the tracks are not competing directly, are they competing indirectly, given NOAA criteria for awarding equitably across geographies?

A: The tracks have separate evaluation criteria and thus are not directly competing against each other—they are essentially two distinct competitions. Direct competition would be with other applications within the same track and the same geography. At the end of the competition, we anticipate having a balanced portfolio of Track One and Track Two across all regions. Please let us know if you have additional questions.

85. If a Track One project is being proposed, is the NEPA environmental compliance questionnaire required? Further clarification on the required forms for track one would be appreciated.

A: Yes, a completed NEPA environmental compliance questionnaire is required for all projects.

86. Can pre-award costs be considered using these funds?

A: Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the performance start date at the applicant's own risk. Pre-award costs more than 90 days before the start of the award may also be considered, but require prior approval from NOAA. This does not change the period of performance start date. Pre-award costs should be considered and discussed during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the federal award, and only with the written approval of the federal awarding agency. This could include proposal preparation costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460) that are not covered in indirect costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. All costs incurred before NOAA makes the award are at the recipient's risk.

87. We were asked to keep our status confidential, but we'd like to obtain additional letters of support. Is there guidance on that?

A: NOAA is not requiring confidentiality of the status of applicant's participation in the program. Applicants are encouraged to notify project partners and stakeholders including requesting letters of support. NOAA is requesting applicants not make broad public announcements given NOAA is not able to release information about the status of specific applicants during a competition.

88. How should we coordinate with a state-wide organization that may also be competing for the NOAA funding? Do we reach out to the organization? What if they do not want to collaborate in the event they are competing for the NOAA grant?

A: One of the four program priorities is regional collaboration. Applicants are encouraged to connect with appropriate stakeholders that work at any scale. Applicants should consider the perspective of reviewers and describe the steps taken (or plan to be taken) to engage with

relevant stakeholders, including state-wide organizations. Applicants are welcome to discuss opportunities for collaboration with any entity including other applicants. Applicants are welcome to consolidate applications at their own discretion. NOAA is restricted from being able to share information about specific applicants and proposed activities during the competition, as that information could inadvertently create an advantage or disadvantage for any applicant.

89. What kind of support from what kind of partners are relevant for this process? How will these be evaluated in the overall scoring?

A: See page seven of the [application guidance](#). NOAA is looking for letters of support from stakeholders and partners who are supportive of and will benefit from the project investment. Letters of collaboration from partners who are engaged in the project are also recommended. These letters should describe the commitment the partner will provide to the project.

90. Do funding recipients and supporters need to be directly involved in the planning and writing of the project or grant application, or can they just provide a letter of support?

A: Regional collaboration is a program priority, which involves meaningful engagement between project partners and collaborators. Funding recipients are considered collaborators and NOAA would expect these entities to have significant involvement in planning the activities described in the application. The applicant should include a letter of commitment from each collaborator that documents review of the application and includes a statement of commitment to supporting and executing the activities proposed in the application.

91. Are letters of support from NOAA's partners required? What about letters of support from NOAA programs?

A: No, letters of support from NOAA partners are not required, although applicants are encouraged to connect with relevant NOAA partnerships and place-based programs in their regions as part of the application development process. Efforts or plans to connect with NOAA partnerships and place-based programs should be described in the letter of intent. To learn more about and connect with NOAA's network of regional, state, and place-based partners specific to your region, please send us an email at resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov.

Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowed and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers. If an applicant requests technical assistance from NOAA or has other involvement with current NOAA programs or staff as part of an application, the applicant should describe the nature and extent of the desired roles and responsibilities within the application. The specific roles and responsibilities for NOAA involvement will be negotiated with successful applicants as part of the award development process.

92. What mailing address should we use for letters of support?

A: Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration and letters of support, must be submitted together in one package for consideration by the merit reviewers. Letters of support should be addressed to NOAA Selection Official at the following location:

NOAA Office of Coastal Management
2234 South Hobson Ave
Charleston, SC 29405-2413

93. Do you have design criteria for the portfolio of projects in either Track One or Track Two? For example, geographic representation, size of project?

A: The applicant-specified region should be of a size and scope that can facilitate the implementation of resilience and adaptation actions at a regional scale and provide direct benefits to local communities. Regions could range from within a single municipality to multiple coastal jurisdictions in several states. Within a defined region, the places and communities should face similar weather and climate impacts, share adjacent or overlapping geographical interests or administrative boundaries, or benefit from the same natural, social, economic, or infrastructure systems. The region must be in eligible coastal states and territories, and there is no specific minimum or maximum size by geographic distance or number of jurisdictions. Regions may be made up of or include tribal lands, and NOAA encourages applications that benefit tribal lands or tribal priorities. Applicants should be able to demonstrate, with the amount of funding requested from NOAA, significant, tangible resilience and adaptation outcomes that benefit the specified region as a whole and individual coastal communities.

94. The notice of funding opportunity asks applicants to describe milestones. Can you define “milestones” as compared to outputs or outcomes, for example?

A: A milestone is an action or event marking a significant change or stage in development. An output is something produced or delivered. An outcome is the end result of having reached milestones and completed outputs. Outcomes reflect how the project made a difference in the and illustrate the positive impact and milestones reflect the significant steps completed in order to reach the outcomes.

95. Are there any preferred methodologies to calculate metrics for risk reduction?

A: NOAA is currently developing some additional resources to support applicants in developing risk reduction measures. These resources will be discussed as part of an upcoming webinar on monitoring and measuring performance scheduled for January 17, 2024, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

96. Is there a page limit to the application?

A: There are page limits for various aspects of the application package. Page limits assume an 11- or 12-point font and one-inch margins, and may use single spacing. Applicants should number pages in their full proposal and any appendices.

PDF 1. Project Summary (three-page limit)

PDF 2. Project Narrative (25-page limit)

PDF 3. Budget Narrative (no page limit)

PDF 4. Supplemental Materials and Appendices (50-page limit recommended)

PDF 5. Letters of Support and Collaboration (no page limit)

97. Are graphics encouraged throughout the narrative, or should they specifically be included in the appendix?

A: The location of graphics is at the applicant’s discretion. If including graphics in the Project Narrative (PDF 2) will impede upon the applicant’s ability to fully address the application requirements within the 25-page limit, then it is advisable to include them in Supplemental Materials (PDF 4).

98. I'm wondering if inserting hyperlinks is a useful thing (for references); or not very useful, and possibly a distraction?

A: Applicants may use hyperlinks. However, reviewers are not required to review them. If the information is essential to the project description, it needs to be included in the narrative.

99. If an applicant submits a preliminary cost estimate in the letter of intent, then does more in-depth analysis for the full application, can the award request in the full application be different from the cost estimate in the letter of intent?

A: Yes, estimates provided in the letter of intent are non-binding.

100. Can you offer guidance about whether we are allowed to deviate from our letter of intent budget and by what percent is acceptable?

A: Some deviation is normal, but there is not a defined standard. NOAA does not anticipate dramatic changes or entirely new projects, but there is latitude to adjust the period of performance, funding levels, collaborators, and activities. Applicants should consider describing the circumstances surrounding significant changes between the letter of intent and the application.

101. Any insights on how to describe parts of the proposal that might have changed between the letter of intent and full application? Specifically, note it? Or just develop a full application without referencing the letter of intent?

A: Applicants should describe major changes in project partners, activities, and budgets and the context for those changes (e.g., based on reviewer feedback, based on NOAA guidance, change in requirements, etc.). The lead entity may also change between the letter of intent and application stages. Applicants must notify NOAA of the name of the new applicant and the letter of intent ID number prior to submitting the application.

102. Similarly, how to describe or notate when parts of the application are also being submitted to another grant application?

A: Applicants should describe activities within the application that are also under consideration by other funding programs. Applicants should provide the name of the funding program, the notification timeline, and how the outcome of the funding decisions would impact the NOAA application, if funded or not funded.

103. Does NOAA choose how much a project is awarded, or do we specify in the letter of intent?

A: Applicants should specify the budget amount in their proposal. Final award amounts will be determined through the award negotiation process.

104. What does the negotiation process include?

A: The negotiation process may include administrative and programmatic changes requested by NOAA. This may entail changes to forms, funding levels, proposed activities, and other details in the detailed budget justification. The negotiation process also provides an opportunity for an applicant to identify their specific technical assistance needs and how NOAA may address those needs through implementation of the award.

105. How long do applicants have to spend the funds? What is the award period of performance?

A: NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for awards under both tracks will be 36 to 60 months. The maximum period of performance for any award is 60 months. Under extenuating circumstances, no-cost extensions beyond the initial period of performance can be requested and will require approval by NOAA.

106. Can a project continue beyond the performance period? For example, if a restoration project is part of a regional effort?

A: All funded activities must be completed within the five-year performance period. Work on the project may continue if there is other funding to do so. Be sure to clearly describe actions that will be undertaken with NOAA funding, the actions that other funding will support, and the relationship between those actions and other ongoing or planned efforts.

107. Is there a process for time extensions beyond five years from the grant start date?

A: The maximum period of performance for any award is 60 months. Under extenuating circumstances, no-cost extensions beyond the initial period of performance can be requested and will require approval by NOAA.

108. The notice of funding opportunity sets the grant period at 60 months. If construction is an activity, what is the latest it can be started, and can it extend beyond the 60 months?

A: The portion of any construction project that NOAA would fund cannot extend beyond the period of performance, so the project would need to be initiated and completed within five years, regardless of when it starts.

109. How will NOAA ensure geographic distribution of selected awards? Is there a regional allocation of funding anticipated?

A: There is no specific funding allocation for regions. All proposals will be evaluated and scored to create a ranked list. The selecting official shall consider the geographic area of the highest scoring proposals and may recommend applications for funding out of rank order to ensure geographic distribution nationally. The selecting official may also select high-scoring proposals out of rank order according to other selection factors, which are listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

110. When can successful applicants begin their projects?

A: Awards are anticipated to begin on or after October 1, 2024.

111. How does NOAA keep track of progress and involvement?

A: Performance measurement and evaluation mechanisms should be included in all proposals. If applicants need assistance with evaluation and performance measurement, they should describe the support they need in the letter of intent. Awardees will work with a NOAA representative to finalize reporting requirements for the award, including submitting progress reports at regular intervals throughout the performance period and notifying NOAA if they anticipate the timing of any milestones will be delayed.

112. Do the achievable actions for Track Two have to be directly related? Or can there be separate actions that bring about the goal of coastal resilience?

A: Actions can be separate; however, they should all contribute to the regional vision for resilience. For example, NOAA would be supportive of a proposal that includes acquiring land, advancing policy reform, and building capacity.

113. Can states or non-profits award funding to subrecipients?

A: Yes, states and any other applicant can pass through funding as long as the activities are completed within the period of performance and support the program priorities. However, these funds are not considered block grants and applicants should clearly describe the intentions, expected outcomes, and processes for distributing funds in the letter of intent and application.

The non-federal entity must have and use documented procurement procedures, consistent with state, local, and tribal laws and regulations and the standards of the Office of Management and Budget's uniform guidance (2 CFR 200), for the acquisition of property or services required under a federal award or sub-award. When procuring property and services under a federal award, a state must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-federal funds.

114. What are the best ways to decide if project collaborators should be sub-awardees or subcontractors? How does that impact reporting requirements and indirect costs?

A: Sub-award means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a federal award, including a portion of the scope of work or objectives. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual who is a beneficiary of a federal program. The key part is supporting or stimulating the public purpose of the award (not procuring or purchasing things for the benefit of the prime recipient which would be a subcontract).

The prime recipient is responsible for submitting all reports to NOAA for a sub-award or contract.

Per 2 CFR 200.1, Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each sub-award (regardless of the period of performance of the sub-awards under the award). Based on the Modified Total Direct Costs, total indirects are charged on the total direct charges (which include total contractual and up to the first \$25,000 of each sub-award).

115. Do pass-through grants (e.g., mini grants) need to be competitive, or can they be directed, or both?

A: They can be both. It depends on the grant recipient's own procurement standards. It is common for pass-through grants to be competitive or non-competitive. Non-competitive pass through grants require sole source justification aligned with the recipient's procurement standards, which must align with the Office of Management and Budget's uniform guidance 2 CFR 200.

116. What level of engineering is required for the application. Is preliminary engineering sufficient?

A: Applicants should provide sufficient level of detail to enable NOAA to review the activity and determine any necessary actions to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other statutes. All engineering designs must be in place and reviewed and approved by NOAA before funds for the activity can be released.

117. Can you come with an existing consultancy team that was competitively bid, or do you need to rebid new scoped work? Would the existing team be conflicted out if they have not worked on the application?

A: The Office of Management and Budget's uniform guidance (2 CFR 200) requires recipients to follow its own procurement standards. If a contract is being awarded as a sole source contract, the justification should be in accordance with the prime recipient's standards. NOAA may request documentation to ensure compliance with standards and procedures.

118. Can the firm that did the preliminary engineering in support of an application bid to provide the final engineering post award?

A: NOAA will defer to the procurement rules of the lead entity when contracting with private firms. The entity must have and use documented procurement procedures, consistent with state, local, and tribal laws and regulations.

119. If we have concerns about data sharing requirements and data sovereignty, where should we include that in the application?

A: Applicants should describe the need for NOAA to waive its standard data sharing policies in order to preserve data sovereignty within the Data Management Plan. Applicants who are selected for funding will work with NOAA to address concerns related to data sovereignty when finalizing the Data Management Plan during the award negotiation period.

BUDGET

120. How much funding can each proposal request? Is there a minimum funding amount per proposal? Are there any special considerations for applications that are lower than funding minimums?

A: For applications for Track One, the minimum amount that can be requested is \$500,000 and the maximum requested amount is \$2 million. For applications for Track Two, the minimum amount that can be requested is \$15 million and the maximum amount is \$75 million. Any applicant who anticipates requesting less than that amount should reach out to NOAA via the program email to discuss the circumstances for requesting less than the minimum.

121. Are matching funds required?

A: Pursuant to the Inflation Reduction Act, Public Law: 117-169, Section 40001, there is no non-federal matching requirement for this funding.

122. No match is required, but how are “leveraged resources” evaluated or considered?

A: The evaluation criteria for projects costs in the notice of funding opportunity include the following:

Track One: Does the proposal describe how the proposed activities include strategic partnerships with collaborating institutions, agencies, foundations, community organizations, or private-sector partners? Do the proposed activities leverage resources from other organizations or funding sources? Or describe efforts and associated challenges in identifying leveraging opportunities?

Track Two: Does the proposal demonstrate that the proposed activities leverage resources, and to what extent, from other organizations or funding sources? Or describe efforts and associated challenges in identifying leveraging opportunities?

123. Can these funds be used as non-federal match for other federal programs that require match?

A: Funds can be used as non-federal match for a project funded by another federal agency if the other agency’s grant announcement allows it.

124. Is the amount of funding requested a consideration in the evaluation criteria?

A: No, the amount of funding requested is not a consideration in the evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria does consider the extent to which the estimated costs are realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. In cases where funding may not be available to cover all costs, NOAA may negotiate the funding level for proposed activities selected for funding.

125. Will applicants score higher if their proposal includes a non-federal match, even though it is not required?

A: Non-federal matching resources (cash or in kind) are not required, nor are they part of the evaluation criteria. If non-federal resources are voluntarily committed, they must be tracked and reported throughout the period of performance.

126. The notice of funding opportunity states that “efforts to leverage resources will be considered as part of the evaluation criteria,” but the FAQ says “non-federal matching resources (cash or in-kind) are not required, and are not included in the evaluation criteria.” What is the difference between leveraged and matching resources?

A: Non-federal match is the contribution of non-federal cash or in-kind services (e.g., time, professional services), and is not required for this funding opportunity. If an applicant voluntarily identifies non-federal match and the proposal receives funding, applicants will be required to track and report on that funding. Leveraged resources can be federal or non-federal funds or in-kind services, or any of the other items described on page eight of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (and below).

“Successful proposals will leverage scientific information, Indigenous knowledge, and local knowledge and technical skills that are distributed across a diverse group of organizations and sectors, including NOAA and other federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies. These leveraging opportunities include previous or ongoing investments in resilience and

adaptation, such as information sources (e.g., assessments, studies, plans, tools, training, technical assistance), and mechanisms (e.g., funding, programs, partnerships).”

Leveraged resources will be evaluated during full proposal review as part of the project cost criteria. NOAA encourages applicants to leverage resources to ensure NOAA’s funding is maximized to the greatest extent possible. Leveraged funds should not be included in budget forms.

- 127. Federal budget forms: we have construction components (e.g., flood risk reduction on-the-ground efforts) and non-construction components (e.g., development of a regional collaborative). Does NOAA expect us to separate out the construction from the non-construction components and submit both the SF-424A and SF-424C forms? Or since construction is involved in the overall application, should we submit only the SF-424C?**

A: Each identified non-construction sub-award should include form SF-424A. Each identified construction sub-award can include form SF-424A, but must include form SF-424C.

- 128. Is there a cap on the percentage of overhead for institutions?**

A: Yes, for entities with an established indirect cost rate with the federal government, the rate is capped at the amount set forth in the negotiated agreement. If an award recipient does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, the indirect costs are capped at 10 percent of modified total direct costs, unless subject to an exception. Non-federal entities may use this de minimis rate indefinitely, but may choose to negotiate an indirect cost rate at any time. This de minimis rate option is not available to state and local governments and tribes. Applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate may reduce the indirect cost rate to demonstrate leveraging of resources, which will be evaluated as part of project costs.

- 129. We know we must spend the funds within the five-year project period. If we were to transfer funds to a third party, would this count as “spending”?**

A: If these funds were provided to a sub-awardee, the sub-awardee must also spend the funds within the period of performance of the overall award.

- 130. How will the funds be dispersed? Would NOAA directly reimburse identified partners and sub-awardees?**

A: Funding that is negotiated to be included as part of the award will be available at the beginning of the period of performance. Advance payments may be arranged in certain circumstances at the discretion of NOAA. The lead entity will draw down on funds using the Automated Standard Application for Payments System (ASAP) as funds are needed, unless there are special circumstances that require funds to be made available on a reimbursable basis. The lead entity will then provide those funds to contractors and other collaborators using their own procurement standards.

- 131. If we, a non-profit, apply as a sub-grant under a territory submission, will we have to wait for reimbursement until the territory has submitted for reimbursement to NOAA, received the funds, and decides to cut us a check?**

A: All funds will be available up front to the lead entity. The lead entity will draw down on funds using the Automated Standard Application for Payments System (ASAP) as funds are needed, unless there are special circumstances that require funds to be made available on a reimbursable basis. The lead entity will then provide those funds to contractors and other collaborators using their own protocols.

132. The budget summary in the template asks for a vendor name. What if an applicant may need to secure grant funding before going out to bid for a contractor or vendor to complete the work?

A: Please indicate the contractor or vendor is “to be determined (TBD)” and briefly describe the circumstances and associated procurement process.

133. What portion of the grant award budget can be allocated toward project administration?

A: NOAA does not provide specific guidance within the notice of funding opportunity in relation to that question. NOAA encourages applicants to look closely at the evaluation criteria associated with project cost. Reviewers will be looking to ensure that overhead and indirect costs (including project management oversight administration) are reasonable and reduced to the extent practicable.

134. Can small costs for food at public meetings be allowable costs?

A: Yes, the costs of meals and refreshments connected to conferences, or training, or other community gathering are allowable. Applicants should provide a justification explaining why the provision of food is necessary to conduct the work or meet the goal of the project.

135. Are interpretation equipment, language interpreters, and translation of documents eligible expenses?

A: Yes, these expenses are allowable.

136. With inflation, construction costs are increasing at a rapid pace. How can this program accommodate this uncertainty for approved projects?

A: Applicants should account for inflation and other factors within their proposed budgets.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

137. Will technical assistance be available in the case of a government shutdown?

A: Yes, we plan to be able to provide technical assistance if there’s a shutdown. We don’t intend to change the process for requesting support at this time. We will communicate any updates regarding the competition to applicants via email in the event of a government shutdown.

138. Are applicants required to use the digital resources included on the program website?

A: The online resources included on the program website are meant to help applicants better understand the program priorities (risk reduction, regional collaboration, equity and inclusion, and enduring capacity). The resources serve as a starting point, but are not meant to be comprehensive. The resources include both documents and tools, and are binned by program priority and listed in alphabetical order. NOAA does not expect applicants to use all resources or cite specific resources within their application.

139. What mechanisms are available for geospatial data and services acquisitions associated with funded proposals?

A: If an applicant plans to acquire geospatial data or services as part of their proposed work, NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management can assist in the efficient acquisition of these services via the NOAA Coastal Geospatial Services Contract. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this contract because it is an efficient way to acquire these services and can eliminate

the need for the applicant to go through their own contracting processes. NOAA's Office for Coastal Management can provide guidance, cost estimation, development of geospatial specifications, statement of work development, vendor negotiation, acquisition, data access, and dissemination.

If the applicant chooses to use NOAA's technical assistance and contracting mechanism, the proposal should fully describe the requirement as stated in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and reiterated here:

"Applicants proposing geospatial data acquisitions should include information about the type, timing, and location of the data to be collected within the Project Narrative and estimated cost within the Budget Narrative. Estimated costs should not be included in the standard NOAA budget forms (SF424, SF424-A/B, SF424-C/D) given the proposed acquisition will take place outside of the grant award if the proposal is selected for funding."

If an applicant chooses to use their own contracting or acquisition mechanisms, they should describe that fully in their proposal and budget narrative, and request that funding in the standard NOAA budget forms (SF424, SF424-A/B, SF424-C/D).

140. How is technical assistance defined, and what types of technical assistance will be provided by NOAA?

A: Technical assistance is defined as targeted, customized support to help and empower individuals and organizations to build their knowledge, ability, or capacity to achieve specific goals and outcomes. Examples of technical assistance during the application period include instruction on the eligibility of specific activities, as well as on navigating the application process;

- direction on accessing and interpreting climate data, models, and tools, including geospatial and socioeconomic information;
- guidance on mechanisms for geospatial data and services acquisitions associated with funded proposals;
- connection to subject matter experts and resources within and outside of NOAA;
- introductions and suggestions for regional contacts as potential partners; and
- discussions of technical assistance opportunities to support a funded proposal.

Visit the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge [technical assistance webpage](#) for more information.

141. Will applicants score higher or lower if they ask for technical assistance?

A: Technical assistance needs and associated requests are not considered during the evaluation process. NOAA asks for technical assistance needs to assess what kinds of services are needed to improve internal planning.

142. Who funds the fellow—the host institution/grantee?

A: NOAA is exploring setting up a program that would provide the fellow to hosts at no cost. The host would need to provide mentoring, daily oversight, and potentially a work space, unless the fellow will be fully remote staff, depending on the host's office arrangement. The host would also provide a description of the fellow's responsibilities, and most likely have a role in recruiting, interviewing, and selecting the fellow. The idea is that all fellow costs are covered.

143. Would the fellow be available for the whole period of performance (or is it an annual fellowship)?

A: The duration of the fellowship is to be determined and may vary across awards.

144. If we are interested in hosting a fellow, how do we reflect that in our application? Will anyone who wants a fellow be awarded one, or do we need contingencies for personnel in our budgets in case the fellowship program falls through?

A: Please mention your desire for a fellow in your technical assistance section, along with any details you have in mind, such as who would provide primary oversight, mentorship, the duration requested, and the focus of their work. Without knowing demand, NOAA cannot guarantee a fellow for all interested awardees. Whether or not contingencies for personnel are included in the budget, the budget may be adjusted during award negotiation.

145. Should use of NOAA technical assistance be budget neutral, or if we want to write it in can we adjust the budget to reflect possible additional workload?

A: NOAA technical assistance is offered without cost to applicants and should not be included in the budget forms (SF-424s). If activities are included that are determined to be provided by NOAA, the budget may be adjusted during award negotiation.

146. How many knowledge-transfer or lessons-learned meetings are anticipated?

A: Three events are specified in the notice of funding opportunity for applicant budget planning. NOAA may hold additional optional events, including national or regional events.

147. Would it be appealing or not to add NOAA knowledge transfers into regional conferences planned within the grant?

A: Applicants may include ideas for additional knowledge transfer opportunities in their application, such as interactive sessions, exchanges, or training at regional conferences. This is not required and should be considered within the context of relevant evaluation criteria.

148. What federal information or data is available to help states determine the best use of Track Two funding?

A: An abundance of information and data related to weather and climate risks are available from federal agencies, including NOAA, on the program's "Resources" page: coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge/resources.html.

LAND ACQUISITIONS

149. For land acquisition projects, which entities can hold title to land (fee simple or easement interest) acquired through infrastructure funds?

A: Land acquisition projects funded under this competition must provide for non-federal public ownership (fee-simple title or easement interest) by a non-federal public entity or ownership by a private entity whose organizational purpose or goal is conservation, restoration, or preservation of land and natural resources. Non-federal public ownership includes state agencies, federally recognized tribal governments, local governments, or entities eligible for assistance under section 306A(e) of the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 USC 1455a[e]), provided that each has the authority to acquire and manage land for conservation purposes.

150. Could multiple land acquisitions be included in one proposal?

A: Yes. NOAA recommends that applicants limit the scope to acquiring no more than three separate parcels within a single proposal. Properties containing multiple parcels covered under a single appraisal, title report, and survey plat could count as one parcel (e.g., a subdivided property with the same landowner).

151. Can an applicant submit a proposal for an acquisition that needs to close ahead of when the award will be issued? For example, if the acquisition closes in June, can the applicant use bridge funding to pay for it, and use Inflation Reduction Act funds (if selected) to pay themselves back?

A: The cost of land acquisition may be reimbursed as a pre-award cost if the acquisition occurred between the selection date (the date that the NOAA selection official recommends a list of projects for funding) and the start date for an approved grant award. Reimbursement of funds is subject to NOAA's approval of due diligence documents; closing on a property prior to the award start date is at the applicant's risk.

152. We have identified coastal parcels at risk that we wish to purchase. We cannot speak to the owners' intent or desire to sell at this point. Do we need a letter from them, or can we aspire to work out the details in the future?

A: The challenge with a situation like that is the acquisition would need to take place during the period of performance and must take place from willing sellers. Applicants should indicate in the application if the seller is willing, and include a letter from the seller. If that is not clear in the application, reviewers may see considerable risk and reflect that in their scoring.

153. Would acquisitions that include areas that would be developed for public access (e.g. docks, boardwalks, kiosks) be eligible?

A: Yes. To be competitive, land acquisitions and any subsequent development activities must align with the program priorities, including risk reduction. Acquisitions that provide co-benefits are encouraged, including providing passive public access to coastal areas for recreation. Acquisition of land for active recreation, such as sports facilities, water parks, playgrounds, or similar uses, are ineligible, except for at a de minimis scale. Construction and retrofit of public access infrastructure, including the restoration of boardwalks, boat ramps, bridges, bathrooms, or walkways, is eligible for funding under this competition, if consistent with the program priorities.

154. Are installing a monitoring post or a public education and outreach post considered on construction activities on conservation lands?

A: Installation of ecosystem monitoring systems and education and outreach displays are eligible activities that could provide co-benefits as part of a broader risk reduction activities, such as a land acquisition. Costs associated with providing public access are eligible. While these may be eligible activities, applicants should consider them in the context of the overall risk reduction benefits.

155. If public access is allowed on land acquired with NOAA funding can fees be charged for access?

A: Applicants can charge access fees on land they acquired with federal funds. However, they may be required to deduct or add those funds to the grant award. These fees would be considered “program income” during the performance of the award. Program income means gross income earned by the non-federal entity that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the federal award during the period of performance. Program income includes but is not limited to income from fees for services performed, the use or rental or real or personal property acquired under federal awards, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under a federal award, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and principal and interest on loans made with federal award funds. Per the Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, B.05 Program Income: “Unless otherwise indicated in the award terms, program income may be used for any required cost sharing or added to the project budget, consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.307 (Program income).”

156. If a portion of the land being acquired is slated for development (40 acres of 500) but the rest (450) would be in conservation in perpetuity, would the acquisition not be allowed for NOAA support?

A: NOAA will not support acquisition of any land that is not for conservation. Acquired land purchased with funds from this program must be held for conservation in perpetuity. Development activities on land acquired with funds from this program, including the construction of facilities, must be consistent with conservation purposes.

157. Can land acquisition be for groundwater recharge as opposed to vulnerable land?

A: Yes. If there is a regional vision for resilience that includes these activities If land acquisition or restoration addresses the risk created by climate change in that region, then it would be eligible.

158. Regarding acquisitions, if we are awarded will we be able to draw down on the fund if we have an executed contract? Or are we expected to pay for the property and ask for reimbursement?

A: Applicants are able to draw down funds for property acquisitions. The budget narrative should include detailed, compelling justification to demonstrate the need for any pre-award costs or advance payments associated with a land acquisition or any other activity.

159. **Can funding be used as part of a collection of funding sources to buy a property (i.e., for larger and thus more expensive properties), or must an applicant fully acquire the property without other contributing funds?**

A: Yes, applicants can leverage different funding sources to acquire a property. Separate funds will need to be tracked separately and clearly. Applicants must clearly document other funding sources and amounts, and what percentage of the property's acreage the NOAA funding is allocated to.

160. **When acquiring property with federal funds, are purchase prices limited to fair market appraised value? Or are these funds allowed for purchases that exceed such appraisals?**

A: NOAA supports acquisitions at fair market appraised value and up to five percent over the appraised value, in limited circumstances, if sufficient written justification and demonstration of an attempt to negotiate at appraised value is provided. Above that five percent, NOAA does not allow funds to be used to purchase over the appraised value. However, if the recipient wants to contribute their own funds to make up the difference between appraised value and purchased price, then that would be allowable, although NOAA still discourages transactions that could distort market values.

161. **Are there any restrictions on due diligence costs for land acquisition or nature-based restoration projects?**

A: There are no restrictions on due diligence costs. However these costs should be minimized to the greatest extent possible and only be associated with the proposed acquisition.

162. **Can funds be used for conservation easements (i.e., less than fee-simple land acquisition)? Is the purchase of a conservation easement to protect agricultural lands an eligible activity?**

A: Yes, funding can be used for the acquisition of less than fee-simple easement interest in a property if the conservation easement will be held by an eligible public entity or a private entity whose organizational purpose or goal is conservation, restoration, or preservation of land and natural resources. An easement solely to protect agricultural use alone would not likely be competitive.

163. **Would collaboration between several land trusts to acquire critical coastal land be an eligible activity?**

A: Yes, land acquisitions are eligible. One entity would need to apply on behalf of the others and sub-award funds. For the project to be competitive, it must also address all program priorities.

164. **Would migrating or relocating a town be eligible, including purchase of land and construction of facilities?**

A: Planning, designing, or preparing for implementation of community-led relocation efforts are eligible. The construction of new facilities is not an eligible activity within this program. The acquisition of land for conservation and/or for the purpose of constructing or restoring natural infrastructure is also eligible. However, acquired land purchased with funds from this program must be held for conservation in perpetuity. Development activities on land acquired with funds from this program, including the construction of facilities, must be consistent with conservation purposes.

165. If there is Indigenous cultural significance to a land acquisition project, does that satisfy the requirement for co-benefits under Track Two?

A: Yes, the protection and/or preservation of culturally significant resources would be considered a co-benefit of a proposed land acquisition.

KEY TERMS

166. What is the definition of a coastal community as it relates to this funding opportunity?

A: This funding opportunity provides maximum flexibility for applicants to undertake activities that may have significant coastal benefits but may not take place in coastal areas. For example, a state capital or a state university may be far from the coast, but activities that take place in these locations can provide direct benefits for coastal communities. Another example is land development and conservation actions in upland areas within coastal watersheds that provide significant benefits for coastal communities. The focus of all activities should be on reducing risk to coastal communities, infrastructure, economies, and ecosystems, and on benefitting coastal communities. The stronger the economic, social, or environmental benefits to coastal communities, the more likely it is that the project will be evaluated favorably.

167. How is resilience defined?

A: “Resilience” is the ability of a coastal community to prepare and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and more successfully adapt to weather and climate impacts.

168. What is meant by “transformational resilience”?

A: “Transformational resilience” refers to the process and associated actions that result in dramatic, positive changes in a coastal community’s ability to prepare and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and more successfully adapt to weather and climate change impacts.

169. What is a resilience hub?

A: Resilience hubs are defined by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network as community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life. Hubs provide an opportunity to effectively work at the nexus of community resilience, emergency management, climate change mitigation, and social equity, while providing opportunities for communities to become more self-determining, socially connected, and successful before, during, and after disruptions. For the purposes of this competition, resilience hub(s) must use pre-existing facilities. Funding cannot be used to construct new buildings, although upgrades to existing facilities are allowable.

170. How does NOAA determine if a community is marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented?

A: NOAA relies on applicants to describe specific populations and communities they intend to engage, and how they are marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented. Several national tools and resources are listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity that applicants can use to identify and assess populations and communities based on U.S. census data. NOAA also values local knowledge of community characteristics that are not reflected in national tools, especially in places where the data may not be complete or available.

171. What is knowledge transfer? And what are some examples of knowledge-transfer activities that regional collaboratives may want to consider?

A: Knowledge transfer is the sharing or disseminating of knowledge from one entity to another for problem solving. In the case of this competition, knowledge transfer may entail organizing, creating, capturing, and sharing knowledge gained by the proposed activities to others to ensure its future use, both inside the region and elsewhere. Appropriate activities for knowledge transfer may include, but are not limited to, the development of informational products, tools, training, or risk communication and outreach. It may also include improving access to data and information related to current and future environmental, economic, and social conditions, and building capacity to integrate this information into sound planning and decision-making.