

Introduction to NOAA Office for Coastal Management Grants

NOAA Office for Coastal Management
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Introduction to Grants

[Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is the system where all federal grant-making agencies post competitive grant opportunities for new and continuing programs. [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is the single access point for more than 1,000 grant programs and provides access to approximately \$650 billion in annual awards offered by the 26 federal grant-making agencies.

The NOAA Office for Coastal Management's competitive grant announcements can be found on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by searching under the following Federal Assistance Listing numbers:

- 11.419 – Coastal Zone Management Administration (including Projects of Special Merit, Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, the National Estuarine Research Reserves Collaborative Science Program)
- 11.420 – Coastal Zone Management Estuarine Research Reserves
- 11.473 – Office for Coastal Management (Bay Watershed Education and Training, Coastal Resilience, Great Lakes Areas of Concern Land Acquisition)
- 11.482 – Coral Reef Conservation Program

All applications for NOAA Office for Coastal Management grant programs should be submitted electronically using [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Applicants without internet access may submit hard copy application packages according to the directions stated in the funding announcement.

The following grant terms are commonly used by NOAA:

- **Grant** – The legal instrument reflecting a relationship between NOAA and a recipient whenever (a) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer money, property, services, or anything of value to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by federal statute; and (b) no substantial involvement is anticipated between NOAA and the recipient during the performance of the contemplated activity.
- **Cooperative agreement** – A project with substantial involvement (e.g., collaboration, participation, or intervention by NOAA or the federal government in the management of the project) anticipated between the government and the recipient during performance of the contemplated activity. Cooperative agreements are subject to the same Office of Management and Budget, Treasury, and other federal agency laws and policies as grants. See [31 U.S.C. 6305](https://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/31-usc-6305).
- **Letter of intent** – A concise description of a proposed project and its relevance to program objectives. These descriptions are usually two pages or less, may require specific components, and may be optional or mandatory, all according to guidance in the grant announcement.

- **Multi-year award** – An award with a project period of more than 12 months that is partially funded in year one and subsequently funded in increments. Funding for each year’s activity is contingent upon the availability of funds from Congress and satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of the agency.
- **Multiple year award** – A one-year funded award that disperses all funds in year one for a project period that may cover multiple years.

Grant applicants will need to provide assurances in their proposals that reflect applicable federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders. Recipients will also need to follow any terms and conditions subject to the award. Recipient award letters will identify provisions, terms, and conditions incorporated into awards. NOAA award letters commonly address the following:

- Department of Commerce financial assistance standard terms and conditions
- NOAA administrative standard award conditions
- GrantsOnline award action request guidance
- Special award conditions
- Line item budget
- Uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal award (Office of Management and Budget uniform guidance codified under [2 C.F.R. Part 200](#)). See notes one and two below for additional information on the uniform administrative requirements.
- Department of Commerce pre-award notification requirements for grants
- Other provisions (as noted in financial assistance awards or amendments – CD-450 and CD-451)

Note 1 Uniform guidance applies to all awards and award amendments made on or after December 26, 2014. The award date for a federal award determines which guidance governs sub-awards. Sub-awards must follow the same guidance and requirements as the federal award.

Note 2. The uniform guidance government-wide requirements, affecting federal awards to non-federal entities, may also apply to for-profit entities in limited circumstances and to foreign entities as described in this guidance and the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria

Applicants should be aware that NOAA uses six standard evaluation criteria for its competitive assistance programs. A complete explanation of evaluation criteria and the selection process is outlined in all federal funding opportunities, specifically Section V, which is entitled, “Applicant Review Information.” Criteria weights may vary according to the announcement, except for the data management plan, which carries five points.

Evaluation Criteria for Projects:

- **Importance, relevance, and applicability of proposed project to the program goals.** This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. If data are collected, this criterion will address, as necessary, whether there is a thorough and effective data management plan.
- **Technical and scientific merit.** This assesses whether the approach is technically sound or innovative, whether the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

- **Overall qualifications of applicants.** This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
- **Project costs.** The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.
- **Outreach and education.** NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the nation's natural resources.

Successful Grant Proposals

Successful competitive grant proposals include the following information and components:

- Proposal cover sheet
 - Project title
 - Proposed project period (start and end dates)
 - Type of project (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement)
 - Recipient name (must match registered name in System for Award Management)
 - Recipient Unique Entity Identifier number
 - Principal and other investigators (names, organization, and contact information)
 - Financial representative (names, organization, and contact information)
 - Requested funding by year (as appropriate) (if the project intends to have NOAA retain funds for technical assistance on the project, note the amounts by year and line office using the funds)
 - If the project is intended to be administered under an existing NOAA Cooperative Institute, state which institute will administer the award
- Proposal abstract or summary
 - Project title
Requested funding by year (as appropriate)
 - Brief project summary including objectives, partners, expected results, and intended benefits and outcomes
- Project description
 - An explicit statement within the cooperative agreement proposals of the roles and responsibilities of the NOAA Office for Coastal Management, the grant applicants, the applicants' partners, and how these roles will be collectively applied to an effective examination of coastal management issues. NOAA partnerships should be clearly summarized; if the application anticipates substantial federal agency involvement in the project, the project description must articulate the federal agency (or agencies) involved and what their roles will be in the project. Cooperative agreement proposals include a collaborative plan between the grant applicant and the Office for Coastal Management that makes effective use of each organization's strengths and capabilities; or a plan for the Office for Coastal Management and the grant applicant to work together to fully develop more detailed tasks early in the project when roles are unknown.
 - An itemized budget and a detailed budget narrative of project costs, including labor, travel, supplies, and other costs.
 - A description of a clear quality-control strategy.

- A data or information sharing plan of no more than two pages is required as part of the project description for projects that collect data.
- Details on how a broad range of coastal managers will use the products once the project is completed. A clear statement of the planned impacts of the project and products in the coastal management community. Information on outputs and outcomes can be found in guidance developed by the [University of Wisconsin-Extension](#).
- Appendices
 - Appendices must follow guidance stated in the respective announcement. Appendices include materials that directly support the main body of the proposal, such as support letters, principal investigator and co-principal investigator resumes, references, lists of data sources, maps, and National Environmental Policy Act material.

Impact Statements

Recipients of awards sponsored by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management are commonly requested to clearly state any products developed under financial assistance awards and the resulting effects of the project on the coastal management community (e.g., how did or will the recipient's accomplishments make a positive difference?).

The [Virginia Tech University, Office of Communications and Marketing](#) and [NOAA Sea Grant Program](#) provide useful guidance on how to write impact statements and include real-world examples.