



Cooperative Agreement Process Quick Start Guide

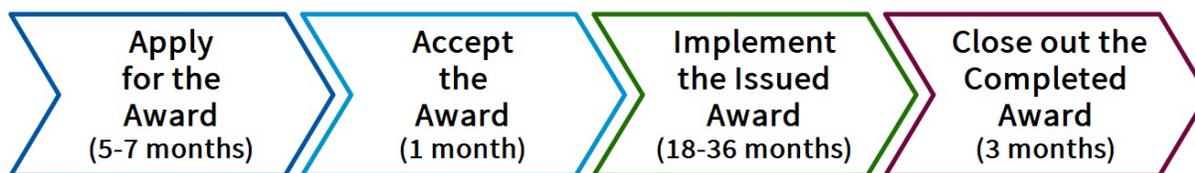


Table of Contents

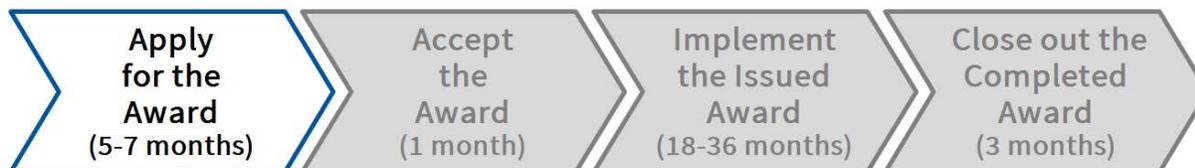
Stage 1: Apply for the Award	2
Stage 2: Accept the Award	6
Stage 3: Implement the Issued Award	9
Stage 4: Close out the Completed Award	13

QUICK REFERENCE



Cooperative Agreement Process Quick Start Guide, Stage 1

Apply for the Award



In this stage, you complete steps to create and submit an application for CZMA funding. This quick reference provides a checklist and overview of the steps in stage 1. This is an orientation to the process without all of the details.

Note: For complete information on rules and regulations on the process, please refer to requirements of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, which are codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, agency and department terms and conditions, Department of Commerce pre-award requirements, and any special award conditions.

Stage 1 Checklist

Time to Complete: 5-7 months

Due Date: _____

Discuss proposed activities with a NOAA liaison

Draft a CZMA award application (typically January or February).
Start coordinating with a NOAA Office for Coastal Management liaison.

Review programmatic funding guidance

Ensure cooperative agreement is consistent with the programmatic funding guidance and any relevant operations guidance.

Complete necessary checks

Check [DUNS#](#), [Sam.gov](#), and [Grants.gov](#) registrations and audit information.

Develop draft application in CAMMP

Use Coastal and Marine Management Program (CAMMP) database system (coast.noaa.gov/cammp/) to develop the application, budget narratives, and budget tables.

Review draft with NOAA liaison

NOAA liaisons review draft applications to ensure that they meet both the programmatic and administrative requirements for funding.

Revise draft as needed

After the NOAA liaison review, revisions may be required during the application process. Revisions must be completed before submitting the application.

Find funding opportunity on Grants.gov

After the draft is complete, find the funding opportunity and application materials on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

Develop all application materials

Complete all required application forms and prepare additional attachments as needed. These will include approximately 10 forms or attachments.

Obtain state clearance and submit through Grants.gov

Obtain necessary clearance and approval for the coastal management program's agency-authorized representative to submit through Grants.gov.

Confirm receipt of application

Verify receipt of [three automated emails from Grants.gov](#) to confirm receipt, acceptability, timeliness, and validation that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing.

Negotiate and submit revised materials as needed

Answer additional questions from the NOAA liaison or the grants management specialist if questions about the application package arise. Provide revised application materials as requested.

Stage 1 Overview

To apply for a CZMA cooperative agreement, the coastal management program needs to complete multiple steps to create and submit an application for CZMA funding.

The following provides an overview of the tasks in the above checklist.

Discuss proposed activities with NOAA liaison

The coastal management program can draft a CZMA award application as early as possible (typically January or February), and should start coordinating with its NOAA Office for Coastal Management liaison as soon as application development begins. These conversations usually focus on the scope of the proposed award, including

- Major initiatives
- New activities
- Major coastal issues to address, including issues identified in audits or previous 312 evaluations
- Activities identified in the award that are making progress toward the long-term goals in the current Section 309 Assessment and Strategy document

NOAA liaisons can also identify

- Resources and assistance NOAA and its partners can offer in the implementation of the award
- Unallowable costs in the award. This helps reduce processing delays.
- Projects that are likely to require more in-depth environmental compliance review, such as an environmental assessment, which would delay the release of funds for the project.

Review programmatic funding guidance

Ensure that the cooperative agreement is consistent with the programmatic funding guidance and any relevant operations guidance. Each year, NOAA develops annual funding guidance for the coastal management programs. This funding guidance lists each program's annual funding allotment, as well as program-wide funding priorities and related guidance.

Complete Necessary Checks

A number of elements needed to apply for an award can be checked while working on the draft application, including [DUNS#](#), [Sam.gov](#), and [Grants.gov](#) registrations, and audit information.

- A Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number is the first step in registering as an organization applicant in Grants.gov and it must be current.
- The System for Award Management ([Sam.gov](#)) – use it to complete a registration renewal required once a year. Applicants must have an active Sam.gov registration to submit an application in Grants.gov and receive funds. Applications will not be processed if the registration lapses during review.
- Grants.gov – use it to find the CZMA federal funding opportunity and the application package for the cooperative agreement, and to submit the final cooperative agreement application.
- The Federal Audit Clearinghouse – use it to find out whether the single-state audit findings for the current fiscal year are complete.

Develop draft application in CAMMP

The Coastal and Marine Management Program (CAMMP) database system is an online template ([coast.noaa.gov/cammp/](#)) coastal management programs are required to use for developing the CZMA award application project, budget narratives, and budget tables.

- Project narratives include descriptions of each task proposed. The narrative should be developed so that the coastal management program provides a clear picture of the work to be done, why it needs to be done, and who will be completing the work. The narrative should also include information on the deliverables to be produced and milestones or benchmarks by which the Office for Coastal Management can review progress on the task.
- Budget narratives include descriptions of the actual costs associated with the tasks in the project narratives. The budget narrative should outline costs for categories such as salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, indirect costs, and contractual and sub-awards.

Review draft with NOAA liaison

NOAA liaisons review draft applications to ensure that they meet both the programmatic and administrative requirements for funding. Programmatic review includes evaluating whether the proposed tasks address coastal management priorities, are eligible uses of the relevant section funding (e.g., 306, 309), and meet government requirements. Administrative review includes evaluating the cooperative agreement to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements for federal awards.

Revise draft as needed

After the NOAA liaison reviews the draft application, revisions by the coastal management program may be required during the application process. Revisions must be completed before submitting the application through Grants.gov.

Find funding opportunity on Grants.gov

After the draft is complete, find the funding opportunity and application materials on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). This is the website to find and apply for federal awards, including the CZMA annual funding.

Develop all application materials

Complete all required application forms and prepare additional attachments as needed. These will include the following:

1. **SF424 (Grants.gov):** Formal Application for Federal Assistance – contains summary and contact information
2. **SF424B (Grants.gov):** Assurances: Non-Construction Programs
3. **SF424A form (Grants.gov):** Federal Budget Form
4. **Project Narrative and Budget Narrative (CAMMP File):** The CAMMP PDF file will serve as both the project narrative and budget narrative.
5. **Personnel Worksheet:** If personnel detail not provided in CAMMP Budget Narrative, include separate personnel worksheet
6. **Current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:** If applicable. Captures the current negotiated indirect rate your agency can charge the federal government.
7. **CD-511 (Grants.gov):** Certifications Regarding Lobbying
8. **306A Materials** (if applicable): 306A questionnaire; supporting project information (e.g., maps, title opinion, appraisal, design plans)
9. **SF-LLL (Grants.gov):** Disclosure of Lobbying Activity (submit with your proposal only if your organization is engaged in lobbying activities)
10. **Data Management Plan** (if applicable): A brief plan outlining how activities funded by the award will adhere to NOAA's data sharing policy

Obtain state clearance and submit through Grants.gov

Once the application materials are complete, obtain necessary clearance or approval for the coastal management program's agency-authorized representative to submit through Grants.gov. Depending on clearance requirements for your state, this step might need to be started earlier in the process to ensure timely submission of your application process through grants.gov.

Confirm receipt of application

After submitting the application through Grants.gov, verify receipt of *three automated emails from Grants.gov* to

1. Confirm receipt by Grants.gov, not NOAA
2. Confirm that the submission is acceptable and timely (receipt of reply messages from Grants.gov verifying acceptance or rejection of your application can take up to 48 hours)
3. Validate that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing

Negotiate and submit revised materials as needed

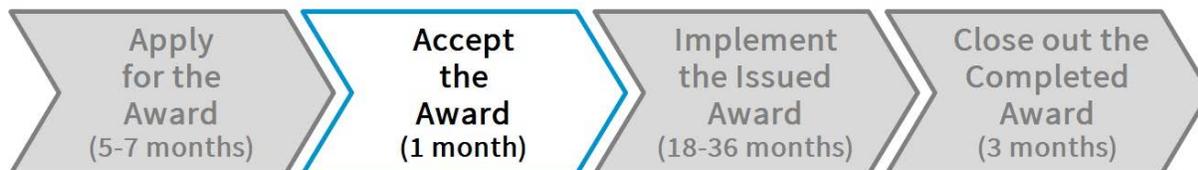
After submission is confirmed, be prepared to answer additional questions from the NOAA liaison or grants management specialist if questions about the application package arise. Provide revised application materials as requested.



Cooperative Agreement Process

Quick Start Guide, Stage 2

Accept the Award



In this stage, you undertake several actions to accept the award and set up proper management, accounting, and reporting systems. This quick reference provides a checklist and basic descriptions of the steps in stage 2. This is an orientation to the process without all of the details.

Note: For complete information on rules and regulations on the process, please refer to requirements of the Office and Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, which are codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, agency and department terms and conditions, Department of Commerce pre-award requirements, and any special award conditions.

Stage 2 Checklist

Time to Complete: 1 Month

Due Date: _____

Receive notification of award

The authorized representative confirms receipt of an automatic email from Grants Online serving as notification that NOAA has awarded the cooperative agreement.

Review terms and conditions

Review the terms and conditions. There will be a variety of special and standard conditions.

Accept award within 30 days of notification

The authorized representative accepts the award within 30 days of being issued. This constitutes agreement to comply with all associated award provisions.

Manage award users

Upon receipt of the task to “Manage Award Users,” the authorized representative must associate or add the principal investigator in Grants Online and additional personnel.

Enroll in ASAP.gov

Check that the award is linked to the [Automated Standard Application for Payments \(ASAP\)](#) account so that funds can be drawn down electronically for allowable expenses.

Stage 2 Overview

Once NOAA has approved the award, the coastal management program transitions from an applicant to a recipient. The award recipient will need to undertake a number of actions to accept the award and set up proper management, accounting, and reporting systems, including the [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#) (ASAP).

Note: Grants Online is the Department of Commerce’s online grants management system. Once the cooperative agreement has been submitted to Grants.gov, it is automatically routed to Grants Online, the Department of Commerce’s online grants management system. After this step, all grant processing and grant management activities will take place through the Grants Online system. This system serves as the official NOAA record for all awards, and a clearinghouse for documents related to closed or expired grants.

The following provides an overview of the tasks in the above checklist.

Receive notification of award

Grants Online sends automatic notification to the authorized representative (and only the authorized representative) that NOAA has awarded the cooperative agreement.

Review terms and conditions

Once your program gets the notice of the award, review the terms and conditions. There will be a variety of conditions, including special award conditions (SACs) that are specific to the award and NOAA and Department of Commerce standard terms and conditions that are applicable to all awards and agency conditions.

Accept award within 30 days of notification

After reviewing the terms and conditions, the coastal management program’s authorized representative accepts the award. When the authorized representative signs the award through the form CD-450 or CD-451 in Grants Online, this constitutes agreement to comply with all associated award provisions, including the attached standard terms and conditions and the award-specific special award conditions. The award must be accepted within 30 days of being issued.

Manage award users

After accepting the award, the authorized representative will receive a task to “Manage Award Users.” Within 30 days of receiving the award offer, the authorized representative must associate or add the principal investigator in Grants Online. Additional personnel include the business and financial representative, recipient administrator, and recipient users. These roles must be added or identified in Grants Online by the authorized representative, and must be maintained and kept current throughout the award.

A number of roles are included in managing the award, including

- **Authorized representative:** This person has access to all awards for the entity and is responsible for submitting financial and progress reports, submitting award action requests, accepting the awards, or reassigning tasks. The representative is also responsible for adding or creating Grants Online accounts. This person has been designated to represent the entity and is generally not the principal investigator.

- **Principal Investigator:** The person responsible for the day-to-day activities of the award is the principal investigator, generally considered one of the “key personnel.” Principal investigators can only see specific awards in Grants Online, not all awards within the entity. While they are often the primary contact to NOAA, they cannot submit award action requests or progress reports unless they have submitting authority designated in Grants Online. They are allowed to initiate or create financial and progress reports, and award action requests.
- **Business and financial representative:** This person has access to all awards for the entity and is responsible for creating financial reports.
- **Recipient administrator:** This person has access to all awards and is responsible for adding personnel in the system. The recipient administrator can also create financial and progress reports, create award action requests, or reassign tasks.
- **Recipient Users** (additional key personnel): These users can see only the specific award designated in Grants Online and have view-only access. They cannot submit or create reports or award action requests.

Enroll in ASAP.gov

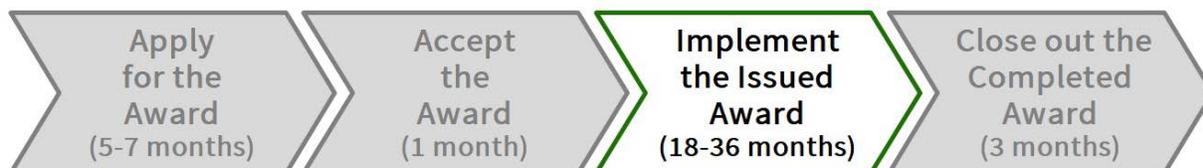
ASAP.gov (Automated Standard Application for Payments) allows recipients to draw down cooperative agreement funding electronically for allowable expenses. After accepting the award, it is important to check that the award is linked to the ASAP.gov account. If your coastal management program does not have an ASAP.gov account, enrollment can take 2-4 weeks or longer. ASAP.gov is only for entities with a U.S. bank account.

QUICK REFERENCE



Cooperative Agreement Process Quick Start Guide, Stage 3

Implement the Issued Award



In this stage, you are managing the award, submitting reports, and ensuring that the funded tasks are completed. This quick reference provides a checklist and basic descriptions of the steps in stage 1. This is an orientation to the process without all of the details.

Note: For complete information on rules and regulations on the process, please refer to requirements of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, which are codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, agency and department terms and conditions, Department of Commerce pre-award requirements, and any special award conditions.

Stage 3 Checklist

Time to Complete: 18-36 months

Due Date: _____

Comply with standard terms; conditions

When implementing the award, the coastal management program must comply with terms and conditions of the award.

Satisfy special award conditions

Deadline: _____

Satisfy the requirements (by the deadline, if included) in the special award conditions so they can be removed and any funding withheld can be released to the coastal management program.

Submit performance reports semiannually **Due Dates:** _____ **and** _____

Submit semiannual reports on the progress of the implementation of the cooperative agreements. Progress reports are due 30 days after each 6 month reporting period.

Submit financial reports semiannually **Due Dates:** April 30 and October 30

Submit semiannual interim financial reports on the progress of the implementation of the cooperative agreements on April 30 and October 30 of each year while the award is open.

- Inventory equipment and supplies** **Due Date:** _____
Equipment or supplies costing \$5,000 or greater per unit value, must be inventoried, to include its fair market value, through progress reporting at least once every two years.
- Submit real property report, if needed** **Due Date:** _____
If the award requested funds for real property, submit a report at least annually on its status, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more.
- Submit FFATA reports annually, if needed** **Due Date:** _____
If awarding a subgrant, file a Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) subaward report “by the end of the month following the month in which the prime recipient awards any subgrant greater than or equal to \$25,000.”
- Submit, as needed, post-award actions**
Submit requests for changes to the approved award for review by NOAA as stipulated in the cooperative agreement. These need prior approval from NOAA to go forward.
- Accept amendments to award changes as needed**
If applicable, the authorized representative will be notified that the award has been amended and will need to accept this amendment.
-

Stage 3 Overview

Once the coastal management program has been awarded the funding, it is responsible for managing the award and ensuring that the funded tasks are completed. Coastal management programs are also required to exercise financial control and management over the cooperative agreement funding.

The following provides an overview of the tasks in the above checklist.

Comply with standard terms; conditions

When implementing the award, the coastal management program must comply with terms and conditions of the award. For example, the following commonly apply to CZMA awards:

- Department of Commerce (DOC) pre-award notification and requirements
- Grant regulations
- DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions
- NOAA Financial Assistance Administrative Terms
- DOC Grants Manual
- Special award conditions

Satisfy special award conditions

Most special award conditions are general requirements that apply to the administration of the entire award. However, NOAA sometimes places special award conditions that place additional requirements or restrictions on a specific task, often when the original task description did not include enough information for NOAA to complete budget or environmental compliance review for the specific project. Once a coastal management program has satisfied the requirement set forth in the special

award condition, it can be removed and any funding withheld can be released to the coastal management program. Special award conditions may include deadlines and must be addressed by the deadline. For most project-specific special award conditions, coastal management programs must submit an award action request within grants online to “satisfy” the special award.

Submit performance reports semiannually

Coastal management programs are responsible for submitting semiannual reports on the progress of the implementation of the cooperative agreements. These progress reports are an opportunity to identify progress, any needs that arise during the implementation of tasks, and success stories from the awards. Progress reports are due 30 days after each 6-month reporting period. Performance reports should be consistent with the coastal management program annual awards performance report guidance documents developed by NOAA.

Submit financial reports semiannually

Coastal management programs are responsible for submitting semiannual interim financial reports on the progress of the implementation of the cooperative agreements to NOAA through Grants Online. Financial reports are due April 30 and October 30 of each year while the award is open.

Inventory equipment and supplies once every two years

Equipment or supplies (aggregate supplies, not per unit) at a cost of \$5,000 or greater per unit value must be inventoried, to include its fair market value, through progress reporting at least once every two years. Recipients may use the outdated SF-428 form series to report on tangible property or submit their own customized report including a description of federally owned equipment, identification information, acquisition cost, and acquisition date. Recipients must report on equipment and supplies, at a cost of \$5,000 or greater, purchased by any sub-recipients as well.

Submit real property report if needed

Recipients who requested funds for real property (e.g., land, land improvements, structures, accessory buildings), which is common to construction and acquisition projects (e.g., some types of 306A projects), must submit reports at least annually on the status of real property in which the federal government retains an interest, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports. Recipients must report on real property at a cost of \$5,000 or greater purchased by any sub-recipients as well.

Submit FFATA reports annually, if needed

All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000. The prime awardee (i.e., the CZMA program) is required to file a FFATA subaward report through the FSRS “by the end of the month following the month in which the prime recipient awards any sub-grant greater than or equal to \$25,000.”

Submit, as needed, post-award actions

Coastal management programs will often have actions that need to happen once the cooperative agreement has been awarded. Sometimes these actions will need prior approval from NOAA to go forward. Examples of actions requiring prior approval include

- **No-Cost extensions:** Extension to the period of availability of funding. No-cost extensions must be submitted to NOAA’s Grants Management Division 30 days before the end of the award.

Therefore, recipients must factor in time for the program officer review. The program officer will forward acceptable requests to the NOAA Grants Management Division.

- **Rebudget:** Cumulative transfers that exceed 10 percent of the last approved total budget; or transfers that create a new budget category for the entire award (not just section), or any transfers between direct and indirect costs.
- **Changes in scope of work:** Any revision of the project scope or objectives of the tasks regardless of whether there is a budget change.
- **Changes or absences in principal investigators or key personnel specified in the application:** This could be a new program manager in the state, who will be the programmatic point of contact for the award; or it could be a change to the key principal investigator leading one of the subtasks.
- **Equipment:** Purchase of equipment not expressly identified in the project description prior requires prior approval of the Grants Office.
- **Foreign travel requests:** Recipient requests for foreign travel that were not specifically outlined in the original or previous project description require prior approval.
- **Subaward or contract to a federal agency:** Recipients cannot subgrant or subcontract to any federal agency without prior approval.
- **Removal of programmatic special award conditions:** Recipient must submit evidence to document satisfaction and removal of special award condition to release funding. _

Coastal management programs should work with their Office for Coastal Management liaison to develop and review these requests, and then notify NOAA by submitting requests in Grants Online.

Accept amendments to award changes, as needed

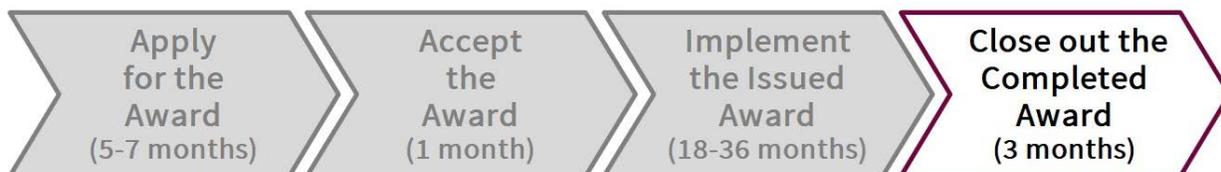
Certain post-award action requests, if approved, require an amendment to the award. In these cases, the authorized representative will be notified that the award has been amended and will need to accept this amendment.



Cooperative Agreement Process

Quick Start Guide, Stage 4

Close out the Completed Award



In this stage, you will prepare and submit final reports and make final drawdowns and payments. This quick reference provides a checklist and basic descriptions of the steps in stage 4. This is an orientation to the process without all of the details.

Note: For complete information on rules and regulations on the process, please refer to requirements of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, which are codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, agency and department terms and conditions, Department of Commerce pre-award requirements, and any special award conditions.

Stage 4 Checklist

Time to Complete: 3 months

Due Date: _____

Request extension to close out if needed

The recipient may request a one-time extension to the closeout period of up to 60 days if additional time is needed to complete closeout responsibilities. Restrictions apply.

Ensure data-sharing plan has been implemented

Ensure the environmental data-sharing and information-sharing plan has been implemented, if environmental data were created or collected.

Submit final progress report

Submit a final progress report that covers the last six months of the award. This report is due 90 days after the award expires.

Submit final equipment and supplies report

Inventory and include in the final progress report equipment or supplies costing \$5,000 or greater per unit value, including its fair market value.

Submit equipment transfer to new award request, if needed

Submit a request to transfer equipment purchased with cooperative agreement funding to a new award if the equipment can be used in the new award for a similar purpose.

Submit real property report, if needed

Complete standard form SF-429 if funds were requested for real property.

Submit a final funding drawdown through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP recipients)

Before submitting the final financial report, submit a final funding drawdown to pay any remaining invoices through ASAP.gov.

Submit final financial report **Dates:** _____

Submit the final financial report in Grants Online 90 days after the award period ends.

Stage 4 Overview

Closeout is the period in which the coastal management program will prepare and submit final reports and make final drawdowns and payments. The closeout period is the 90 days following the expiration of an award. The only costs that are authorized during the closeout period are those strictly associated with closeout activities (e.g., preparation of final progress, financial, and required project audit reports, unless otherwise approved in writing by the grants officer).

The following provides an overview of the tasks in the above checklist.

Request extension to closeout if needed

If additional time is needed to complete closeout responsibilities, such as a report submission or payment drawdown, the recipient may request a one-time extension to the closeout period of up to 60 days. This request must be submitted 10 days before the end of the closeout period in Grants Online. This request does not allow the recipient more time to conduct programmatic activities.

Ensure data-sharing plan has been implemented

The CZMA awards include a special award condition that applies to activities where environmental data are collected or created. Part of satisfying the condition includes creating and implementing an environmental data-sharing and information-sharing plan.

Submit final progress report

During the closeout period, the coastal management program will submit a final progress report that covers the last six months of the award. This report is due 90 days after the award expires.

Submit final equipment and supplies report

During the closeout period, equipment or supplies (aggregate supplies, not per unit) at a cost of \$5,000 or greater per unit value must be inventoried, to include its fair market value, in the final progress report. Recipients may use the outdated SF-428 form series to report on tangible property or submit

their own customized report, including a description of federally owned equipment, identification information, acquisition cost, and acquisition date.

Submit equipment transfer to new award request if needed

Recipients can submit a request to transfer equipment purchased with cooperative agreement funding to a new award if the equipment can be used in the new award for a similar purpose. The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed after a project's expiration, recipients should request disposition instructions approximately 150 calendar days before the project period ends. NOAA will respond within 120 days with an answer and instructions for disposition of the equipment or property in question. This will allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before the project expiration. The recipient can request equipment disposition instructions by submitting an "other" award action request through Grants Online. Forms SF-428, SF-428C, SF-429, SF-429A, SF-429B, and SF-429C, as applicable, shall be attached with the "other" award request.

Submit real property report if needed

During the closeout period, recipients who requested funds for real property (e.g., land, land improvements, structures, accessory buildings), which is common to construction and acquisition projects (e.g., some types of 306A projects), must complete standard form SF-429.

Submit a final funding drawdown through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP recipients)

During the closeout period, and before submitting the final financial report, recipients submit a final funding drawdown to pay any remaining invoices through ASAP.gov.

Submit final financial report

A final financial report is due in Grants Online 90 days after the award period ends. Before submitting this report, the recipients should ensure that all funds have been requested and paid by NOAA or drawn down in the ASAP.gov system. All invoices and bills must also be paid before submittal.