

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program: Fiscal Year 2015 Competition

NOAA Office for Coastal Management
www.coast.noaa.gov/funding

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Technical Award Information

QUESTION: How much funding is available through this grant competition?

ANSWER: NOAA anticipates awarding up to \$5,000,000 under this grant program in fiscal year (FY) 2015. Within this amount, we anticipate funding approximately 5-10 awards.

QUESTION: How much funding may each proposal request?

ANSWER: The maximum amount that may be requested for the federal share of each proposal is \$1,000,000 and the minimum that may be requested is \$500,000.

QUESTION: Is match required for this program?

ANSWER: Yes, cost-sharing through cash or in-kind match will be required at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. Recipients provide one-third of the total project cost. For example, for a project requesting \$500,000 in federal funding, the award recipient would need to provide \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions.

QUESTION: When are proposals due?

ANSWER: Applications must be either received and validated by Grants.gov or postmarked and provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, July 24, 2015. Mailed items should be sent to Lisa Warr, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Highway, N/OCM6 (Rm. 10626), Silver Spring, MD 20910. Applications submitted by the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications provided to a private delivery service (e.g., FedEx) must be documented with a receipt.

Regardless of the method of transmission, applications received more than five calendar days after the deadline will not be reviewed.

QUESTION: Who is eligible to apply for this new program?

ANSWER: Eligible funding applicants are nonprofit organizations; private (for-profit) entities; institutions of higher education; state, territorial, tribal, and local governments (which include counties, municipalities, and cities); and regional organizations. Regional organizations are defined as entities that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city or town scale, such as regional ocean partnerships and councils of government. Applicants must conduct projects benefiting coastal communities in one or more of the 35 U.S. coastal states or territories.

QUESTION: Are both federally-recognized and non-federally-recognized tribes eligible?

ANSWER: Yes, tribal governments include all Native American tribal governments (both federally-recognized tribes and those tribes that are not federally-recognized). Tribal governments are encouraged to work on a multi-site scale that builds resilience across the tribal jurisdiction but are not required to work with other tribes on a cross-tribal scale.

QUESTION: Are federal agencies and federal employees allowed to receive funds under this announcement?

ANSWER: No—however, federal agency representatives may serve as collaborative project partners. If federal agencies are collaborators, applicants must provide detail on the expected level of federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to, a partnership role serving in a review capacity, or participating on a priority task team, working group, or leadership team.

QUESTION: Are individuals allowed to receive funds under this announcement?

ANSWER: No—however, individuals may serve as collaborative project partners.

QUESTION: To what extent can non-U.S jurisdictions participate in funded projects?

ANSWER: Foreign governments are not eligible to apply for funding under this announcement.

QUESTION: Is there a size or page limit to the proposal?

ANSWER: Yes. Full proposals should total no more than 10 pages (single-spaced, 11- or 12-point font and exclusive of appendices, title page, and table of contents, if provided, and project summary (see item IV.B.2 in FFO). Appendices should not total more than 30 pages, excluding government forms, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information, and information provided to complete government forms. Reviewers will not review information provided in excess of stated page limits.

The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined should not exceed five megabytes of storage space. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be able to be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

QUESTION: When are successful applicants expected to begin their projects?

ANSWER: For FY 2015 awards, the anticipated start date may be as early as November 1, 2015, or as late as January 1, 2016. The start date must be the first day of the month.

QUESTION: How long do applicants have to complete projects selected for funding under this competition?

ANSWER: Applicants may submit applications with an award period of performance up to 36 months from the anticipated start date.

QUESTION: Should proposals be submitted as grants or cooperative agreements?

ANSWER: Proposals can be submitted as a grant or as a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement means NOAA will have substantial involvement in the project. If NOAA is proposed as a partner in a cooperative agreement, the applicant must clearly identify this in the proposal and explain the roles and responsibilities of NOAA and each partner in implementing the project. Examples of substantial federal involvement may include training; acquiring, increasing access to, and building capacity of partners to use data, tools, and established policies or management practices; convening partners; or providing expertise in meeting planning, facilitation, and development of spatial databases, models, and information analyses. The specific roles will depend on negotiation with NOAA and will be formalized as part of the cooperative agreement.

QUESTION: Under what authority is NOAA providing these funds?

ANSWER: Statutory authority for this program is provided under Section 310 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1456c, titled “Technical Assistance”).

QUESTION: Is there a limit on the number of proposals from any one jurisdiction, geographic area, or region?

ANSWER: No. There is no limit on the number of proposals from any one jurisdiction, geographic area, or region.

Program Objectives

QUESTION: How is “resilience” defined in the context of this competition?

ANSWER: Building resilience involves increasing the ability of coastal communities to 1) plan and prepare for, 2) reduce or absorb the impacts of, 3) recover from, and 4) more successfully adapt to adverse effects of extreme weather, changing ocean conditions, climate hazards, and changing environmental, economic, and social conditions. This is based on the definition used by the National Academy in its 2011 report titled, *Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative*.

QUESTION: What constitutes “regional” in the context of this competition?

ANSWER: The geographic scale for a regional approach may be multi-state, multi-county, multi-city or town, or multi-site (i.e., managed areas, reserves, refuges, parks, etc.)

QUESTION: What are some examples of projects that would be eligible for this competition?

ANSWER: Proposals for this competition should address specific, identified needs of coastal communities from existing plans (e.g., hazard mitigation, climate adaptation, disaster redevelopment, land use, watershed, local coastal, etc.). Appropriate activities that build community resilience may include, but are not limited to, developing and implementing plans, policies, regulations, guidelines, and incentives that enhance community preparedness, recovery, or adaptation to extreme weather, climate hazards, or changing ocean conditions.

Funds will be available to support activities that

- Identify and address priority data, information, and capacity gaps;
- Develop tools, as needed, to inform sound, science-based decisions, which support regional efforts to plan for a resilient ocean and coastal economy;
- Acquire and integrate socioeconomic information with physical and biological information to improve the assessment of risk and vulnerability for planning and decision-making;
- Understand how hazards and changing ocean conditions affect coastal economies, including existing and emerging sectors that depend on the ocean and coasts;
- Develop the information and approaches needed for improved risk communication, and the necessary tools, technical assistance, and training tailored for enhanced resilience to weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions.
- Evaluate the costs, benefits, and trade-offs of systems-based development or redevelopment approaches that incorporate both natural defenses and hard structural solutions; and
- Support the development of sustainable recovery, redevelopment, and adaptation plans and implement programs and projects that incentivize rebuilding and development approaches which reduce risk and increase resilience.

QUESTION: Are projects related to addressing impacts of tsunamis eligible under this competition?

ANSWER: Yes. Tsunami inundation is considered an eligible coastal hazard in this competition. In many cases, addressing coastal impacts of tsunamis will also contribute to addressing coastal impacts from other coastal hazards.

QUESTION: Are these grants for coastal and marine spatial planning?

ANSWER: Any projects that meet the priorities and criteria listed in the full funding opportunity (FFO) will be considered during the competitive review process.

Selection Process

QUESTION: When will NOAA notify applicants if they are successful or not?

ANSWER: NOAA is planning to award successful applications in the first quarter of FY 2016. Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division by the program office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the grants officer electronically. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email that their application was not recommended for funding within 10 business days after the final program office recommendations have been approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division.

QUESTION: Will NOAA ensure geographic distribution of selected awards?

ANSWER: Yes, the NOAA selecting official shall select awards in the rank order provided by a merit panel unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the availability of funding and the balanced distribution of funds according to geography, type of partners, research or focus areas, and project types.

QUESTION: Can proposals not selected for funding in this competition in 2015 be held over and considered for funding next year?

ANSWER: Yes, proposals not funded in the current fiscal period may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

Relationship to Other Resilience Grant Programs

QUESTION: How do the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants administered by NOAA's National Ocean Service differ from the Coastal Ecosystem Resilience Grants (Ecosystem Resilience) administered by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service?

ANSWER: NOAA has developed these complementary grant programs to build the resilience of coastal communities and ecosystems in the United States. The primary focus of the Ecosystem Resilience program is the development of healthy and sustainable coastal ecosystems through habitat restoration and conservation. The primary focus of the Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program is to support regional approaches to building resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors through planning and implementation actions.

For example, the use of nature-based infrastructure (e.g., wetlands, oyster bars) is emerging as an effective strategy to build coastal resilience that provides benefits to coastal communities (storm protection) and coastal ecosystems (habitat). In the context of these complementary programs, the Ecosystem Resilience program would be an appropriate source of funding solely for the construction or restoration of nature-based infrastructure while the Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program would be an appropriate source of funding to support planning and implementation of policies and tools across a network of jurisdictions enabling the use of nature-based infrastructure.

QUESTION: Will NOAA also release a funding opportunity announcement for the Coastal Resilience Networks (CRest) grant program in 2015?

ANSWER: No. the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants (RCRG) Program targets the same eligible entities and is an expanded program addressing similar needs as CRest. The RCRG Program incorporates the strengths of CRest into a national program since CRest was focused only in the U.S. Pacific Islands, West Coast, and Gulf Coast.