

FY 2017 NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2017 NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NRPO-2017-2005159

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.473, Office for Coastal Management

Dates: Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Wednesday, March 15, 2017. Use of a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The objective of the NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants program, jointly administered by NOAA's National Ocean Service and National Marine Fisheries Service, is to implement projects that build resilient U.S. coastal communities, economies and ecosystems. Resilience is the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and successfully adapt. This program is intended to build resilience by reducing the risk to coastal communities, economies and ecosystems from extreme weather events and climate-related hazards. Projects that build resilience include activities that protect life and property, safeguard people and infrastructure, strengthen the economy, and/or conserve and restore coastal and marine resources.

The NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program will support two categories of activities:

1) Strengthening Coastal Communities: activities that improve capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions (states, counties, municipalities, territories and tribes) to prepare and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards; or

2) Habitat Restoration: activities that restore habitat to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards.

Proposals focused on improving capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions should identify and describe how the project will address: 1) the vulnerability, issue(s) or problem limiting the resilience of coastal jurisdictions to be addressed, 2) the proposed project's expected outcomes and the actions to be undertaken, and 3) how the proposed actions will enhance resilience within the jurisdictions expected to benefit from the project.

Proposals focused on restoring habitat should strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of communities to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards. Preference will be given to projects that also benefit threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (hereafter, Listed Species), species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species), or native species of the Great Lakes. These proposals should identify and describe how the project will address: 1) the vulnerability, issue(s), or problem limiting the resilience of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) the proposed project's expected outcomes and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken, and; 3) the measurable impact and benefits on the ecosystem, the species (e.g. Listed or Managed Species) and how resiliency will be increased for surrounding coastal communities.

Within their proposals, applicants must clearly identify which project category (and evaluation criteria – see Section V.A.) their projects should be considered under. If a category is not identified by the applicant within the proposal, NOAA will identify a category for the applicant. No appeals regarding placement will be considered. Projects that propose on-the-ground habitat restoration activities can also include elements that strengthen and build capacity among stakeholders and coastal communities as part of the project.

All proposals submitted in response to this announcement should demonstrate collaboration among stakeholders and leverage recommendations or strategies outlined in previous multi-stakeholder studies, vulnerability assessments, or other comprehensive planning efforts related to ecosystem and/or community resilience. Successful proposals will leverage existing NOAA and other federal agency resilience investments including information sources (e.g. assessments, studies, plans, tools or technical assistance) and mechanisms (e.g. funding, programs, partnerships).

Eligible funding applicants are: nonprofit organizations; private (for profit) entities; institutions of higher education; and state, territorial, tribal, and local governments as defined at 2 C.F.R. 200.64, which includes counties, municipalities, and cities; and regional organizations (as defined in this announcement). Applicants must conduct projects benefiting coastal communities

within one or more of the following U.S. states and territories: Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands (US), Washington, and Wisconsin.

Applications selected for funding through this solicitation will be implemented through cooperative agreements. Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$15 million. NOAA anticipates typical awards will range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000. NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$100,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (recipient contributions or third party in-kind cost share) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. Funding for this program is subject to the availability of FY 2017 federal appropriations.

NOAA will only award funds to proposed projects that receive approval from the State's Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence. If a letter from the Governor cannot be obtained, a letter provided by a Governor's appointee, with a carbon copy (cc) to the Governor, will be sufficient. This requirement does not apply when the applicant is a federally recognized Tribe conducting a project within the bounds of Tribal land.

This announcement integrates the 2015 Regional Coastal Resilience Grants program administered by the NOAA National Ocean Service (NOS) and the 2016 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants program administered by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to building coastal resilience. This competition is being administered jointly by NOS and NMFS. Awarded projects will be administered by either the NOS Office for Coastal Management or NMFS Restoration Center.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Extreme weather events and climate-related hazards have significant impacts on coastal ecosystems and the communities that rely on them. Healthy coastal ecosystems contribute to healthy coastal communities and associated economies and cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. This program intends to invest in collaborative efforts that provide economic and environmental benefits and take advantage of the information, knowledge, and skills that are distributed across a diverse group of organizations and sectors. Proposed projects should leverage resources and mechanisms (human, financial, data/information, programs, and partnerships) to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and successfully adapt to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards.

B. Program Priorities

This NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program is intended to reduce risk associated with extreme weather events and climate-related hazards, by supporting activities that strengthen the resilience of U.S. coastal communities, marine and coastal ecosystems and associated economies. The program will support two categories of activities:

- 1) **Strengthening Coastal Communities:** Activities that improve capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions (states, counties, municipalities, territories, and tribes) to plan and prepare for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards; or
- 2) **Habitat Restoration:** Activities that restore habitat to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards.

Strengthening Coastal Communities: Applications submitted in this category should include actions that reduce current and potential future risk; increase capacity to plan and prepare for or recover from; and/or increase capacity to effectively adapt to impacts of extreme weather and climate-related hazards within U.S. coastal areas. Proposals should employ a collaborative and coordinated approach to improve these capacities within multiple coastal jurisdictions (regions, states, territories, counties, municipalities, and tribal lands) and implement strategies that address community development, economic development, land and ocean use, resource management, resource protection, hazard mitigation, or pre-disaster

recovery objectives. Appropriate activities include, but are not limited to; data acquisition, and information and tool development; risk communication and outreach; education and training development; provision of technical assistance; and the development and/or implementation of plans, policies, guidelines, standards, codes and incentives. High priority will be given to proposed projects that:

- enhance civic capacity and maintain or establish collaborative networks through engagement with appropriate stakeholders, development of collaborative projects and leveraging of resources

- increase stakeholder understanding and awareness of the impacts of extreme weather and climate-related hazards on coastal communities and economic sectors that depend on the ocean and coasts

- improve planners and decision makers' access to data and information related to current and future environmental, economic, and social conditions and their capacity to integrate information this into sound, science-based planning and decision making

- increase planners and decision makers knowledge of the costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of the use of natural and nature-based solutions for a potential range of purposes including but not limited to coastal infrastructure protection, water quality enhancement, habitat creation, and increased recreational value

Habitat Restoration: Applications submitted in this category should propose restoration projects that strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of communities to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards (e.g. drought).

Preference will be given to projects that also benefit Managed Species, Listed Species, or native species of the Great Lakes. Successful projects under this solicitation are those that restore wetlands, functional floodplains, free-flowing riverine systems through barrier removal, coral and shellfish reefs, or create living shorelines thereby providing habitat for fish to reproduce and develop. These projects should also provide resilience benefits such as eliminating risks associated with outdated structures, providing flood reduction and protection benefits, or allowing for adaptation to climate-related hazards.

Proposed projects may include, but are not limited to, actions that restore degraded or altered marine, estuarine, coastal, and riverine habitats in a manner that results in multiple benefits such as decreased vulnerability of coastal communities and improved habitat availability or function for Listed or Managed species. These projects may also be referred to as natural or nature-based solutions, but for the purposes of this category of activities, projects should

result in functioning, resilient ecosystems that restore healthy habitat important for Managed or Listed Species, or native species of the Great Lakes. High priority will be given to proposed projects that:

- result in socio-economic benefits associated with the restoration of healthy and resilient U.S. coastal ecosystems, such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, changes in human well-being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs;
- restore habitat within Blueprint Habitat Focus Areas (<https://www.habitat.noaa.gov/habitatblueprint/>) or habitat for Listed species, including Species in the Spotlight (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/05/05_14_15species_in_the_spotlight.html);
- implement on-the-ground restoration actions that will begin within 24 months of the proposed award start date, will result in beneficial impacts, and achieve the stated ecosystem resilience and habitat goals; and
- demonstrate collaboration and alignment among multiple stakeholders, including state and federal agencies, by proposing projects that implement ecosystem-based multi-benefit restoration recommendations and site-specific strategies outlined in existing coastal vulnerability or resilience studies and comprehensive planning efforts such as fisheries recovery and/or management plans;

Applicants are responsible for identifying the category (Strengthening Coastal Communities or Habitat Restoration) that should be used to evaluate their proposal. See Section IV.B Content and Form of Application for more details. Applicants should select a category for evaluation based on the criteria in Section V. Projects that propose both on-the-ground habitat restoration activities and activities listed in the Strengthening Coastal Communities category are eligible. NOAA recommends applicants proposing projects including activities from both categories consider selecting the category for which the majority of funds are being requested to support. For example, NOAA recommends applicants select the Habitat Restoration category for projects for which the majority of funds are being requested to support on-the-ground habitat restoration activities.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration and conservation: the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; the

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act, 16 U.S.C. 1891a; and Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1535. Additional statutory authority for this program is provided under Section 310 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1456c) (titled “Technical Assistance”).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$15 million. NOAA anticipates typical awards will range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000. NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$100,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Funding for this program is subject to the availability of FY 2017 federal appropriations.

Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (cash or in-kind cost share) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000.

The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Although it is not required for submitting an application under this announcement, NOAA will only award funds to projects that receive and demonstrate approval of the State’s Governor to implement the proposed project as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence by the time of award. If a letter from the Governor cannot be obtained, a letter provided by a Governor's appointee, with a carbon copy (cc) to the Governor, will be sufficient.

Any funds provided to successful applicants will be at the discretion of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, NOAA Office for Coastal Management and the NOAA Grants Management Division. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if the applicant fails to receive funding or efforts in their proposal are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested and the merit and ranking of the applications. Applicants must be in good standing with all existing NOAA grants in order to receive funds. Top ranked 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.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a period of performance between 12 and 36 months. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for 36 months, however an award performance period may be extended up to 48 months at the discretion of NOAA. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2017. Pre-award costs are generally unallowable; however, pre-award costs may be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD provides an award document is at the applicant's own risk.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.24, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, providing technical assistance, review and comment on design plans, meeting planning and facilitation, or review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. 200.324, and tracking the progress towards the successful completion of the project.

If specific resources or expertise are requested by the applicant as part of the cooperative agreement, it should be clearly described in the proposal summary. The terms of roles and responsibilities will depend on negotiation with NOAA and will be formalized as part of the final cooperative agreement for successful proposals.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are regional organizations (see below for explanation), institutions of higher education, non-profit and for-profit organizations, U.S. territories and states, Native American tribes, and local governments as defined at 2 C.F.R. 200.64, which includes counties, municipalities, and cities. To be eligible under this competition, applicants must conduct projects benefiting coastal communities in one or more of the following U.S. states and territories: Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands (U.S.), Washington, and Wisconsin.

For the purpose of eligibility under this announcement, regional organizations are considered entities that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale, such as regional ocean partnerships or councils of government, for example, provided that they may receive and expend Federal funds. If a regional organization is not eligible to receive and expend Federal funds as a legal entity, the organization may partner with an eligible legal entity to apply for funding. Tribal governments include all Native American tribal governments (both Federally-recognized tribes and those tribes that are not Federally-recognized).

For the purposes of this program, coastal areas are defined as those within coastal shoreline counties or coastal watershed counties. Coastal shoreline counties are directly adjacent to the open ocean, major estuaries, or the Great Lakes. Coastal watershed counties are located along inland rivers and streams with a significant impact on coastal and ocean resources.

Applications from individuals, federal agencies, or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Individuals and federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply. Involvement of other federal agencies should be clearly described in the project proposal. Foreign governments are not eligible to apply for funding under this announcement.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

A goal of the NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program is to fund projects that leverage the investment of Federal funds with other contributions from a broad range of public and private partners. Cost sharing is required for eligibility. Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000.

"Cost sharing or matching" is defined by 2 C.F.R. 200.29 as "the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute)." Any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions, will be accepted as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching when the contributions meet the criteria listed in 2 C.F.R. 200.306. For example, matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include third party in-kind goods and services (e.g., private boat use, volunteer labor, etc.). In addition, applicants are permitted to combine contributions for allowable costs from non-Federal partners when they meet the criteria in Section 200.306, such as not being contributed as match for other projects, and being available within the project period stated in the application. Federal contributions

cannot be used as match without a specific legal authority, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage and collaboration. Applicants may also choose to designate part or all of their Federally-negotiated indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to Section IV. E. 2. "Indirect Costs."

NOAA understands that government entities, or organizations working on their behalf, within U.S. Insular Areas (including Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and U.S. Virgin Islands), Puerto Rico, or any federally recognized or non-federally recognized tribe in particular may face a significant lack of available non-federal financial resources at the local level to contribute match. Such applicants, or any applicant that can similarly document severe economic hardship, may request a waiver of the cost-sharing requirement for this program by providing a cost sharing exclusion request letter or provide other language in the required budget narrative as a part of the application package being submitted. The request should contain:

- a detailed justification explaining the need to be excluded from cost sharing at the 2:1 ratio due to a lack of available financial resources at the local level
- any steps the applicant has taken to raise match or ascertain its future ability to raise match
- the amount of match which has been or is expected to be raised
- the amount of match requested to be waived
- how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match
- if applicable, a signed letter by the Governor or tribal leader recognizing a third-party organization as working on behalf of the local government or tribe
- and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the incorporation or local availability of matching contributions.

Waivers are not assured but will be considered. NOAA will negotiate budgets with applicants under consideration for funding upon consideration of the information presented.

An applicant whose proposal is selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by NOAA's Grants Management Division, unless amended based on extenuating circumstances. NOAA is under no obligation to amend the matching contributions once agreed to by the recipient. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the overall number of non-paid volunteers and third party in-kind participation hours. Letters of commitment for any secured resources that will be used as match for an award under this solicitation should be submitted as an attachment to the application (see Section IV.B).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$100,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov and the address for paper applications and the governor's letter is contained in Section IV.G. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than five business days following the closing date will not be accepted. All applications must contain all required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they must be signed in ink (SF-424, SF-424B, CD-511). Failure to submit necessary signed forms shall result in disqualification from this competition.

Section III.A presents information distinguishing eligible versus ineligible organization types. Proposals that solely benefit Listed Species under the jurisdiction of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are not eligible, unless the species is jointly managed by NOAA. Projects that focus on marine debris prevention and removal, acquisition of real property, or beach renourishment projects are also ineligible.

For Habitat Restoration projects, NOAA recognizes that water quality issues can impact Listed Species recovery and Managed Species sustainability. However, one of the primary goals of this program is to fund on-the-ground habitat restoration resulting in physical habitat modifications and more resilient coastal ecosystems. Applications addressing only water quality improvement measures are not eligible. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, elimination of combined sewer outfalls, and replacement of failing septic systems and implementation of agricultural animal waste management plans.

Applicants should also note that the following activities will 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.

NOAA will establish cooperative agreement awards only with applicants that have

successfully received approval from their State's Governor, or their appointee, for the proposed project. This requirement does not apply when the applicant is a federally recognized or non-federally recognized tribe conducting a project within the bounds of Tribal land.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, or using the Grants.gov Workspace feature, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions.html>.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, application packages shall be requested from Lisa Warr, 1305 East-West Hwy, N/OCM6, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or contact her at 240-533-0815 or via email to Lisa.S.Warr@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should apply through the www.Grants.gov website. A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A
- Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, NOAA recommends the following as part of a complete application package:

- Project summary (described below, 2 page limit);
- Project narrative (described below, 15 page limit);
- Data management plan (described below, 2 page limit);
- Budget narrative (described below, 4 page limit);
- Project design plans, for Habitat Restoration projects;
- Other relevant supporting materials as appendices (15 page limit) as applicable such as:

- Brief curriculum vitae or resume(s) for key personnel (maximum of one page per person) and examples of similar projects that have been successfully completed by the project team;
 - Maps showing the project area or restoration sites highlighted;
 - Letter(s) documenting landowner and private/public land manager support as applicable;
- and
- Any other relevant supporting materials such as letters of support (including those from adjoining landowners and those documenting financial and in-kind support), documentation of a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate, monitoring plans, and site photos etc.

Applications submitted through the www.Grants.gov website should include a maximum of four files (PDF files only) in addition to the Federal application forms: 1) Summary, narrative, and data management plan (not to exceed 19 pages total, as outlined above); 2) Budget narrative (4 pages); 3) Project designs (if applicable); and 4) Supplemental information - all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as maps, curriculum vitae, and support letters, not to exceed 15 pages. Page limits assume a 12-point font and 1-inch margins.

1. Project Summary (2 page limit):

All proposals must briefly describe the activities to be implemented with the requested funds including:

- Project Title
- Project Location (e.g. town, watershed, geographic coordinates, etc.)
- Select a category of evaluation criteria (Strengthening Coastal Communities or Habitat Restoration)
- Requested NOAA Funding
- Proposed non-federal match
- The overall project cost including any leveraged funds beyond proposed match.
- Collaboration among stakeholders
- Leveraging of recommendations or strategies outlined in previous multi-stakeholder studies, vulnerability assessments, or other comprehensive planning efforts related to ecosystem and/or community resilience
- Leveraging of existing NOAA and other federal agency resilience investments including information sources (e.g. assessments, studies, or plans) and mechanisms (e.g. funding, programs, partnerships).
- The project timeline including key dates for the proposed project activities (not proposed award start date).

Applications proposing projects for Strengthening Coastal Communities should briefly describe:

- The vulnerability or issue(s) limiting the resilience of coastal jurisdictions to be addressed by the project.
- The proposed actions to be undertaken and the project's expected outcomes.
- The measurable impacts of the proposed outcomes to communities.
- How the expected outcomes will enhance resilience to the impacts of extreme weather and climate-related hazards.

Applications proposing Habitat Restoration activities should briefly describe:

- The vulnerability or issue(s) limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions.
- The proposed project's expected outcomes and detailed actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk.
- The measurable impact on the ecosystem and how resiliency will be increased for surrounding coastal communities.
- How the project also supports sustainable fisheries and contributes to the recovery of protected resources. Identify the Listed Species, including species identified by NMFS as "Species in the Spotlight"; Managed Species; or native species of the Great Lakes that will benefit from the proposed project.
- Project Performance Measures and Outcomes: Common measures used for habitat restoration may include, but are not limited to, the number of acres to be restored and stream miles to be made accessible to diadromous fish through the proposed activities.
- Other measures may include those that demonstrate increased resiliency, which may represent reduced social, economic, or ecological risks due to extreme weather of climate-related hazards.
- Permits and Approvals: Identify and list all consultations, permits, and regulatory approvals necessary for the proposed project and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured).
- Land owner(s): Provide name and address (if privately owned) or public agency contact and their level of support for the proposed project.

2. Project Narrative (15 page limit):

The project narrative should be responsive to the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) described for either Strengthening Coastal Communities or Habitat Restoration to receive a consistent review against competing applications.

a. Background. Provide sufficient background information for NOAA or non-NOAA reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem, gap or need to be addressed and the status of ongoing efforts and coordination to address the identified needs or gaps. Summarize the relationship of the proposed work to

other ongoing efforts.

b. Goal and Objective(s) and Project Activities. Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved during the project period. Also provide sufficient information regarding the project's activities and scope of work. The expected project outcomes should also be clearly stated.

Applications proposing activities for Strengthening Coastal Communities should describe:

- The vulnerability or issue(s) limiting the resilience of coastal jurisdictions to be addressed by the proposal;
- The proposed actions to be undertaken and how the project implements strategies support existing regional, federal, state, tribal or local plans, including but not limited to land and ocean use, development, resource management, resource protection/restoration, hazard mitigation, pre-disaster recover, or other similar plans;
- The project's expected outcomes and how those expected outcomes will enhance resilience through increased capacity to prepare for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to adverse events and changing environmental, economic, and social conditions;
- The measurable impacts of the expected outcomes;
- The roles of partners and cooperators and the approach to leveraging available resources, such as programs, plans partnerships, tools and trainings across government, industry and NGOs, and highlighting the need for any new tools, training, or workshops;
- The proposed actions to disseminate information developed through the project to defined audiences within and beyond the project area; and
- Potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives.

All Strengthening Coastal Communities projects should include activities to transfer knowledge within and outside of the project area by organizing, creating, capturing and/or distributing knowledge to ensure its availability for future use and may also have on-the-ground components. For example, a pilot or demonstration project which seeks funding for small scale natural or nature-based infrastructure (e.g. living shorelines) may select the Strengthening Coastal Communities category, in order to be evaluated based on the extent of transfer of knowledge both within and beyond the project area. Appropriate activities for this knowledge transfer may include but are not limited to the development of integrated information products, tools, training, or risk communication and outreach.

Applications proposing Habitat Restoration activities to increase coastal ecosystem resiliency, applications should:

- Succinctly describe the historic condition of the project site and the challenges to coastal ecosystem resiliency to be addressed as the primary focus of the proposed project;

- Clearly identify the short-term objectives and long-term ecosystem resiliency and habitat restoration goals of the proposed activities;
- Fully describe the proposed restoration action and technical implementation details;
- Clearly describe how the proposed restoration project design, methodology, and techniques will increase resiliency of the ecosystem and account for or provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts or severe weather;
- Clearly identify the project phase(s) proposed (e.g. engineering design, construction) and provide a detailed implementation plan, including proposed implementation techniques, scope of work for services, cost estimates, required permits and consultations, and design plans (as an appendix); for applicants proposing design and permitting activities, a detailed scope of services or tasks to be completed under this award should be included in the proposal;
- Identify any species (e.g. Managed or Listed Species) targeted by the project, their historic and current status or population estimates, and the extent to which they will benefit from the proposed project;
- Highlight the relevant planning efforts associated with the project and any synergies with other resiliency or conservation efforts in the watershed such as Habitat Blueprint Focus Areas, especially Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery plans, Fishery Management Plans, natural and nature-based infrastructure planning, or other conservation and resiliency studies or assessments, strategic planning or management;
- Identify community benefits, such as: increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, changes in human well-being, and improved or protected infrastructure;
- Describe and quantify (if possible), any decreased flooding impacts; elimination of safety hazards; and/or reduced maintenance costs that may result from the proposed project; and
- Describe future management beyond the period of performance, including mechanisms to protect, maintain, or sustain the project site so the multiple benefits of the funded resiliency project will be lasting, this should include documentation of landowner/land manager support for the project.

For applications proposing Habitat Restoration activities, the following project specific information should be included in the project narrative as applicable:

- Applicants proposing to install fish passage devices or operational control structures such as self-regulating tide gates as a component of the project should include discussion of a management plan that details who will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of such structures and how they will be operated and maintained in the future.
- Applicants proposing to alter tidal exchange should also provide a hydrograph showing any tidal restrictions and projected conditions with restoration.
- Applicants proposing to enhance existing tidal wetlands, including beneficial re-use of dredged material to increase elevation to keep pace with sea level rise and subsidence,

should provide information on the source of the dredge materials, the site-specific rate of sea level rise and subsidence, target elevation, and how the restored site will keep pace with the rate of sea level rise and subsidence.

- Applicants proposing to place plants or animals into the environment should include the origin/source and regional genetic stock of the plant or animal, and describe the proximity to any existing or remnant sources of similar type in the area.

If multiple restoration sites are included within one application, the proposed restoration activities should be hydrologically or ecologically connected, follow a comprehensive and integrated approach, and feature shared or complementary outcome goals. Applications that include multiple restoration sites should also fully describe the proposed activity at each site within the project narrative section. If page limits are restrictive, focus the application on the technical aspects of the proposed actions and on those actions with highest priority funding needs. If all aspects of a multi-site project cannot be described within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

Sufficient detail should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of proposed work to program priorities described in Section I.B of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed scope of work raises any concerns with regard to federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

c. Milestone Schedule. Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes. For Habitat Restoration projects, this includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured), as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section VI.B.4). For projects with NEPA documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement), the lead federal agency, contact information for the lead federal agency person, and where copies of the document are available.

d. Evaluation. Describe the approach for evaluating project results using clear measure(s) of success and monitor longer-term effectiveness of employed strategies, where appropriate. The collection of additional data or information for monitoring effectiveness is eligible; however, only for the duration of the award's period of performance. If data collection is

proposed, applicants are encouraged to plan for longer-term data management needs in coordination with NOAA, as described in Section IV.B.4 of this announcement.

Proposals with restoration activities should include measures to enable NOAA to evaluate, upon completion, whether the project was executed as designed. Examples include short-term measures such as as-built surveys of construction, post-planting inspection reports, or other appropriate measures. All Habitat Restoration project proposals for fish passage barrier removal, hydrologic reconnection, coral recovery, and oyster restoration projects should include discrete implementation monitoring plans. Specific metrics have been identified for these project types to consistently evaluate whether a project was implemented as designed and provides a basic level of effectiveness. The structure and suggested metrics for these four project types are included in “NOAA Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring: Guidance for proposing and conducting “Tier I” Monitoring,” available at: <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. Applicants should be willing to work with NOAA to adjust the monitoring plan, if necessary, to ensure sufficient, cost-effective implementation monitoring.

Applicants should also consider proposing measures that demonstrate increases in resiliency, which may represent reduced social, economic, or ecological risks due to extreme weather or climate-related hazards. Examples include short-term measures such as number of structures benefitting, changes in the number of days that a road is flooded, change in shellfisheries’ closing days, change in recreational use, etc.

e. Partnerships. Describe the roles of partners, including their experience and capacity in successfully completing similar projects. Also, describe what federal, state, and local organizations or programs will be connected, integrated, and leveraged in the project, including connections to federally-supported resilience efforts. If the project includes federal partners, the specific roles and responsibilities of the federal partners should be clearly identified. Describe how project stakeholders will interact with the project, specific communication mechanisms to be used, and how they will contribute to the outcome or results of the project. Letters of collaboration from identified partners and any letters of support from communities or other interested parties should be included in the appendix as appropriate.

f. Public engagement and outcomes. Describe how the public and stakeholders will be engaged in the development of the desired project outcomes, how information generated by the project will reach its target audience(s) and have a positive impact in the project area(s); and how the proposal uses best practices for communicating risk to target audiences.

3. Data Management Plan (2 page limit)

Proposals submitted in response to this FFO should include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. NOAA's Data and Publication Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts is available at <https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php>

The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the examples provided by NOAA at: <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. Final Data Management Plans may be developed in coordination with NOAA as part of NOAA's substantial involvement, as described in Section II.C.

4. Budget Narrative (4 page limit):

Provide a budget narrative that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package (see object classes on Form SF-424A). The budget narrative should clearly identify and justify the cost of separable elements of the proposed work. The budget narrative should include a detailed breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares. The budget narrative should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget. Detailed guidance for budget justification from NOAA's Grants Management Division is available at: www.coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-GMD-04.09.2015.pdf

Applicants should indicate whether or not the proposed non-federal share has been secured or not. If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project with multiple funding sources, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included.

Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in an annual NOAA Grants

Management Division workshop. Applicants proposing activities for Strengthening Coastal Communities may also factor in travel costs for participation in one national meeting of all recipients of awards from this program.

NOAA staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic.

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

- * Name of identified qualified subrecipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.
- * Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
- * Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
- * Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
- * Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.330-200.332 for subawards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See 2 CFR 200.33 Equipment, 2 CFR 200.313, and 2 CFR 200.317-326.

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

The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 CFR 200.317 - .326. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for any portion of travel, prior approval is required under the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section K.03.c., <http://go.usa.gov/3zVu9>, and therefore, such travel should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts.

5. Project Design Plans (if applicable, for Habitat Restoration projects)

This section should include engineering design drawings or conceptual plan drawings, if available. Please do not include full length watershed plans or feasibility assessments.

6. Appendices (15 page limit)

Only material that is submitted as a single package will be reviewed by merit reviewers, including letters of support. Letters of support received by NOAA after the application has been submitted will not be considered in the merit review process. Official. Appendices must be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (for example, letters of collaboration, resumes, references, lists of data sources, and maps).

a. Mandatory detailed budget information for each sub award and contract. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or sub award.

b. Letters of Collaboration. All supporting letters from partner organizations, including landowners, which are instrumental to the project, shall be included in the application package. Letters should clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Letters of collaboration do not need original signatures.

c. Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of one page

for each key investigator.

d. Other. Any other relevant supporting materials applicable to the proposal including (and not limited to) maps and photos showing the project area or restoration sites, documentation of a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate and monitoring plans for restoration activities.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25 at <http://go.usa.gov/x9PYd>.

Applicants should: (1) Be registered in the federal SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid DUNS number on an application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

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

Registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed.

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.grants.gov.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern time on March 15, 2017. The time the application was provided to a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. See Section III.C for more information, including a limit on transit time and Section IV.G for an address to submit paper

applications.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under the FFO are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on Form SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC). To find out about and comply with a State's process under Executive Order 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

F. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable in this program, however, pre-award costs may be considered and discussed during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (generally via NOAA Grants Online on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2017.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. 200.56, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g. lights, rent, water, and insurance). Documentation of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f), an applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Lamar Revis, Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose all or part of indirect costs as cost sharing

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer

Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov, as registration with SAM and DUNS are required, as described in Section IV.C. After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt by Grants.gov, not NOAA; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing).

If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with the Grants.gov help desk to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission.

PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants should allow themselves sufficient time to submit their application to Grants.gov in advance of the deadline to ensure applications have been submitted successfully, as waivers of the submission deadline will not be granted. Late applications will not be accepted. If an applicant is unable to use the preferred submission method (Grants.gov) or is unsure about the success of their submission to Grants.gov, a signed hard copy application must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by the deadline under "Submission Dates and Times" in Section IV.D and sent to:

Lisa Warr
NOAA Office for Coastal Management
1305 East-West Hwy, N/OCM6, Room 10626,
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration, should be submitted together in the application package. Only the letter confirming state Governor's support may be sent separately, as it is due prior to the award and not required as part of the application. Mandatory requirements regarding signatures and the format of hard copy applications are described in Section III.C.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The respective weights specified below will be determined by the applicant's identification of which category (Strengthening Coastal Communities or Habitat Restoration) the proposal should be evaluated under as listed in the Project Summary. If a category is not identified by the applicant within the proposal, NOAA will identify a category for the applicant as described in Section V.B.1. No appeals regarding placement will be considered. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and Applicability (35 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities.

For Strengthening Coastal Communities projects, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Issue Identification (5 points) - To what extent does the application describe the vulnerability limiting the resilience of coastal jurisdictions to extreme weather and climate-related hazards?

(b) Vulnerability Reduction (10 points) - To what extent do the proposed project's expected outcome(s) reduce the identified vulnerability and enhance resilience by improving capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions to prepare and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to adverse events and changing environmental, economic, and social conditions?

(c) Benefits to Communities (12 points) - How great is the potential of the proposed project to: enhance civic capacity and public awareness; establish collaborative networks; increase capacity of planners and decision makers to access and integrate data and information related to current and future environmental, economic, and social conditions; increase capacity to consider costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of the use of resilience strategies including nature-based infrastructure; and develop and/or implement sustainable recovery, community (re)development, and adaptation strategies?

(d) Tangible Results (5 points) - To what extent does the proposed project meet NOAA's mission to safeguard people and infrastructure, facilitate commerce, and create resilient coastal and marine ecosystems by delivering tangible, specific results that are measurable and relevant to NOAA performance measures, such as the number of coastal communities that 1) reduced future damages, 2) increased public awareness of hazard risks, 3) developed

or updated hazard-related ordinances, policies, and plans, and 4) employed a coordinated approach across multiple jurisdictions to build resilience, or 5) similar measurable outputs that directly result from the project?

(e) Public Access to Data (3 points) - Does the application include a Data Management Plan including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data?

For Habitat Restoration projects, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Issue Identification - (7 points) To what extent does the application describe an issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events, climate-related hazards, or changing environmental conditions. This includes describing the proposed project's expected outcomes, the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk, the measureable impact on the ecosystem, and the extent to which the surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.

(b) Changes in Community Vulnerability (7 points) - To what extent does the proposed project restore coastal ecosystems in a manner that maximizes community resiliency to extreme weather and climate-related hazards and decreases the vulnerability of communities, including physical and socio-economic vulnerability?

(c) Benefits to NOAA Resources (5 points) - How great is the potential of the proposed project to restore or create resilient, healthy habitat for the benefit of: 1) Listed Species including species identified by NMFS as "Species in the Spotlight"; and 2) Managed Species? This may include projects benefitting Critical Habitat, Essential Fish Habitat, habitat for species native to the Great Lakes Basin, and projects that benefit Listed or Managed Species through ecosystem improvements such as restoring habitat for forage fish. Benefit to Listed or Managed species is necessary to receive full points under this criterion.

(d) Program Priorities (5 points) - To what extent does the proposed project align with the Habitat Restoration category described in Section I.B Program Priorities?

(e) Tangible Results (5 points) - To what extent does the proposed project meet NOAA's mission to protect and restore marine and coastal habitats by delivering tangible, specific

results that are measurable and relevant to NOAA performance measures such as 1) habitat acres restored, 2) stream miles opened for migratory fish passage, or 3) similar measurable outputs that directly result from the project?

(f) Socio-economic Benefits (5 points) - To what extent will the proposed project yield environmentally compatible socio-economic benefits such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, increased value of property, changes in human well being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs? To what extent are these benefits measurable (e.g. number of structures benefitting, changes in the number of days that a road is flooded, change in shellfisheries' closing days, change in recreational use)?

(g) Public Access to Data (1 point) - Does the application include a Data Management Plan including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data?

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (25 points): This criterion assesses whether the project approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear goals and objectives.

For Strengthening Coastal Communities projects, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Project Feasibility (5 points) - To what extent is the proposed approach feasible, technically sound, safe for the public, uses appropriate methods and personnel and includes clear project goals and objectives?

(b) Collaboration and Leveraging (10 points) - To what extent does the proposed approach demonstrate collaboration and alignment among multiple stakeholders, including state and federal agencies? To what extent does the approach implement recommendations and specific strategies outlined in existing coastal vulnerability or resilience studies and comprehensive planning efforts? To what extent does the project implement other strategies called for or developed by regional, federal, state, tribal or local entities including but not limited to land and ocean use, development, resource management, resource protection/restoration, hazard mitigation, pre-disaster recovery, or other similar plans? To what extent does the project leverage available resources, such as programs, plans,

partnerships, tools and trainings within NOAA and across government, industry, and NGOs?

(c) Project Timeline (5 points) - To what extent does the application completely describe the current status of ongoing efforts, the proposed actions, key milestones throughout the course of the project? To what extent is the proposed time frame realistic to reach proposed milestones within the proposed award period?

(d) Measurable Impact (5 points) - To what extent will the proposed project be able to evaluate progress towards stated goals and measures? Does the proposal include specific measures to enable the applicant and NOAA to evaluate whether the project was executed as designed? Pre- and post-implementation monitoring may include both ecological and socio-economic metrics. Consider developing metrics that align with specific indicators of community resilience capacity such as those from the Community Resilience Indicators and National-Level Measures: A Draft Interagency Concept (pp. 7-15)
<https://www.fema.gov/community-resilience-indicators>

For Habitat Restoration projects, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant has described a realistic and thorough implementation plan that includes:

(a) Project Feasibility (5 points) - To what extent is the proposed project feasible from a biological, engineering and social perspective, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe for the public, and uses appropriate methods and personnel?

(b) Project Timeline (5 points) - To what extent does the application completely describe the proposed restoration actions, current status of the project (e.g. 60% design plans are complete), permitting and environmental compliance status, key milestones throughout the course of the project, and a realistic time frame to reach those milestones within the proposed award period? Will the project implement on-the-ground restoration actions within 24 months?

(c) Climate Adaptation (5 points) - To what extent does the proposed project site and methodology associated with the design and implementation of the restoration project account for or provide for adaptation to known or potential climate impacts?

(d) Measurable Goals (5 points) - To what extent will the proposed project be able to report progress towards broad goals and measure near-term implementation success? Does the proposal include meaningful measures to enable NOAA to evaluate whether the project was executed as designed, including implementation monitoring for applicable project types

(See section IV.B.2.d.)? Pre- and post-implementation monitoring may include both ecological and socio-economic metrics.

(e) Sustainability (5 points) - How great is the potential of the proposed project to be sustainable and provide lasting benefits to maintain ecosystem resiliency for species targeted by the project and its habitat? Is there evidence that the applicant has chosen the most self-sustaining restoration technique that accomplishes the project's goals and/or evidence that habitat impacts will not recur? Is there landowner/land manager support, documented in the application (e.g. a support letter)?

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicant (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to support the proposed award.

For both categories of projects, applications will be evaluated based on the following (as demonstrated by attached resumes, past project experience, and accomplishments of the key technical and financial staff):

(a) Background (6 points) - To what extent does the applicant demonstrate the capacity (e.g. staffing, resources, expertise and authority) and knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing similar projects?

(b) Management Capacity (4 points) - Does the applicant describe the necessary experience, facilities, equipment and administrative resources available to successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing a federal grant award?

4. Project Costs (20 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project's needs and time-frame.

(a) Cost-benefit Comparison (5 points) - Has the applicant demonstrated that a significant impact and benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame? If funds are requested for partial support of a larger project or for a project with multiple sites or phases, the application should include the full project budget and/or a budget for each phase to place the funding request in context.

(b) Budget Detail (6 points) - Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of project costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF-424A object classes) that provides

sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications for both federal and nonfederal shares?

(c) Funding Priorities (5 points) - Does the proposed budget direct the majority of federal funds, including funds for salaries, to implement the actions needed to achieve objectives of the project? Have administrative costs for general program support been minimized to the extent possible?

(d) Cost-sharing (4 points) - To what extent is the required non-federal match contribution well documented or confirmed through letters of commitment? If cost sharing at the required 2:1 federal to non-federal ratio is infeasible due to economic hardship, to what extent have the contributing conditions been clearly identified and documented?

5. Outreach and Education (10 points): NOAA assesses whether the award can deliver a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the nation's natural resources.

For Strengthening Coastal Communities projects, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Stakeholder Engagement (4 points) - To what extent does the proposed project demonstrate engagement with a wide range of stakeholders demonstrated by letters of support or confirmed contributions from project partners and other entities including tribes, local and state governments, and/or members of Congress?

(b) Information Dissemination and Knowledge Transfer (6 points) - To what extent does the proposal include activities to disseminate information developed through the project to defined audiences within the project area? To what extent does the strategy include activities to transfer knowledge and experience gained through the project to other jurisdictions or practitioners outside of the project area by organizing, creating, capturing and/or distributing knowledge to ensure its availability for future use?

For Habitat Restoration projects, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Community Involvement (5 points) - Does the proposed project(s) include a wide base of stakeholder and community support that demonstrates the resiliency effort has been put forward by common agreement through inclusion in a public planning process? To what degree does the proposed project(s) have community support as demonstrated by a diversity of partners and/or sponsorship (letters of support, confirmed contributions) from local

entities, tribes, local and state governments, and/or members of Congress?

(b) Information Dissemination (5 points) - Does the proposal include public outreach as it relates to the project, including plans to disseminate information on: 1) ecosystem resiliency goals and results; 2) sources of funding and other support provided, such as the involvement of partners; and 3) the potential for the proposed project to encourage future resiliency efforts and protection of marine and coastal habitats or complement other local restoration or conservation activities?

B. Review and Selection Process

Review and selection will take place in three steps; 1) administrative review, 2) merit review and 3) final selection.

1. Administrative Review. This initial screening will ensure that application packages have all required forms and application elements and meet all of the eligibility criteria. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. During the administrative review, a category for evaluation (Strengthening Coastal Communities or Habitat Restoration) will be determined for each application. On their Project Summary page, applicants should clearly identify which project category (and evaluation criteria – see Section V.A.) their projects should be considered under. If a category is not identified by the applicant within the proposal, NOAA will identify a category for the applicant. No appeals regarding placement will be considered. Projects that propose on-the-ground habitat restoration activities and also include elements that strengthen and build capacity among stakeholders and coastal communities as part of the project will be assigned to the Habitat Restoration category, if the applicant has not clearly stated they wish to be evaluated under Strengthening Coastal Communities. Applications that pass this initial screening will be submitted for merit review.

2. Merit Review. Eligible applications for this competition will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weights described in this solicitation by at least three independent peer reviewers through an independent peer mail review. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. Both Federal and non-Federal reviewers may be used in this process. The merit reviewer's ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals. Separate rank order lists will be generated for each category of project, Strengthening Coastal Communities and Habitat Restoration. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer reviewers through mail reviews.

After the merit review, one or more panels may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official (SO) regarding which of the top ranked proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A. and I.B.). The panel will be comprised of federal employees and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications. The panel will be presented with the top-ranked applications, per the results of the merit review, merit review scores, and comments for each application.

The panel will rate all top-ranked proposals on the following scale:

- 3- Excellent-- Application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B., and was highly responsive to Evaluation Criteria;
- 2-Good-- Application partially addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was strongly responsive to Evaluation Criteria; or
- 1-Fair-- Application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was moderately responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

3. Final Selection. If a panel(s) is convened, the final rating will be presented to the SO for funding consideration and will be the primary consideration of the SO in deciding which applications will be recommended for funding. If a panel is not convened, the competition program staff will create a list of the top-ranked proposals in each category using the average merit review scores. The reviewer comments, project scores, rank order, and a summary of the concerns (if any) identified through the mail and/or panel review process along with information pertaining to selection factors (see below) will be presented to the SO.

Based on this information and the additional selection factors described below, the SO will develop a list of projects recommended for funding. Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the SO may recommend only partial funding, based on the merit and/or panel review evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request

C. Selection Factors

The SO, an official within the Office for Coastal Management (or their designee) anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection

factors:

- (1) Availability of funding;
- (2) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or e) by project types;
- (3) Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
- (4) Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
- (5) An applicant's prior award performance;
- (6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
- (7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

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

Risk Review: After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency. NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is

uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be made by the NOAA Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA will attempt to notify highly-ranked applicants by June 1, 2017. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2017 dependent on funding availability, the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, NEPA analysis, and documentation supporting cooperative agreement activities. Applicants that initiate award activities in anticipation of federal funding do so at their own risk, and are advised not to begin award-related work until a notice of award is received electronically from the NOAA GMD in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance management system.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Full proposals/applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) 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. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by a NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system.

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each award will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these awards.

The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. It is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

NOAA will fund any awards stemming from this competition under Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) numbers 11.463 and 11.473.

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 GMD.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A>.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 C.F.R. 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ>.

3. Terms and Conditions - The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports. These award conditions are subject to change prior to award but examples are provided at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>.

4. NEPA Requirements - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts for individual projects as required by NEPA. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities,

and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

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

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from

funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

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

NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:

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

Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.

More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

6. Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions - When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law. If a form is provided, an award may not be issued until it is returned and accepted by NOAA.

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

NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342, Remedies for Non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R.

200.339.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Grant recipients are required to provide semi-annual financial and performance reports. Performance reports are required every six months from the time an award starts until it is closed. They are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Within 30 days of the conclusion of each six-month period, recipients must submit a report summarizing activities conducted in support of the project during the prior six months. Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer. NOAA's Grants Management Division (GMD) will also provide guidance for its semi-annual financial reporting requirements. Each grant recipient will need to demonstrate, through performance and financial reports, that all award conditions have been met before an award can be closed. Financial and performance reporting, as well as all other grant management activities after a grant is awarded, are conducted electronically through NOAA's grants management system, NOAA Grants On-line, at <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/>.

Select projects may be required to use the NOAA Restoration Center's progress report narrative format and form approved by OMB under control number 0648 0472. This form will be provided to awardees by the NOAA Federal Program Officer. In addition, award recipients proposing multiple site locations may be required to complete individual reports for each site, or provide a project/site list including status and expenditures.

Narrative progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (Oct. 30 and April 30) covering April 1-September 30 and October 1-March 31, respectively.

The recipient will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's GMD and are up to date. In their final progress report, recipients will be asked to a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project and products; and b) certify that Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP).

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory in accordance with OMB guidance that Commerce adopted by regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, which shall be incorporated under the award. The

equipment requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance are set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313. As applicable, a physical inventory of the property must be taken and the results reconciled with the property records at least once every two years. The recipient shall report on real property and tangible property as required in the award and at award closeout, by completing Standard Forms 428 (SF-428) (Tangible Personal Property Report) and 429 (SF-429) (Real Property Status Report). Forms SF-428 and SF-429 may be attached as an appendix to progress reports when applicable.

The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete an "other" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. 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 of \$25,000 and over.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing, a checklist to submit a complete application, and FAQs about this FFO can be found at:
<https://www.coast.noaa.gov/resilience-grant/>, respectively.

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact:

Strengthening Coastal Communities Projects:

Lisa Warr, Office for Coastal Management, at (240) 533-0815 , or by email to Lisa.S.Warr@noaa.gov.

or

Habitat Restoration Projects:

Melanie Gange, Office of Habitat Conservation at (301) 427-8664, or by e-mail at Melanie.Gange@noaa.gov.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact NOAA staff before submitting an application to discuss their project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

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

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.