

Information about NOAA Coastal Services Center Grants

Grant announcements typically are published in the *Federal Register* in July and December. Full versions of the funding opportunities are posted on Grants.gov.

Grants.gov allows organizations to find and apply for competitive grant opportunities not only from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), but also from all federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for more than 1,000 grant programs and provides access to approximately \$500 billion in annual awards offered by the 26 federal grant-making agencies.

Any NOAA Coastal Services Center open competitive grant opportunity can be found on Grants.gov by searching under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, 11.473, which is also known as CFDA 11.473. NOAA grant applications should be submitted electronically using [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Applicants without Internet access may submit hard copy application packages according to the directions stated in the announcement.

The following are common grant terms used by NOAA.

Grant – the legal instrument reflecting a relationship between NOAA and a recipient whenever (a) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer money, property, services, or anything of value to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by federal statute and (b) no substantial involvement is anticipated between NOAA and the recipient during the performance of the contemplated activity.

Cooperative agreement grant – a project with substantial involvement (e.g., collaboration, participation, or intervention by NOAA or the federal government in the management of the project) anticipated between the government and the recipient during performance of the contemplated activity. Cooperative agreements are subject to the same Office of Management and Budget, Treasury, and other federal agency laws and policies as grants. See 31 U.S.C. 6305.

Letter of intent (LOI) – a concise description of a proposed project and its relevance to program objectives. These descriptions are usually two pages or less, may require specific components, and may be optional or mandatory, all according to guidance in the grant announcement.

Multi-year award – an award with a project period of more than 12 months that is partially funded in year one and subsequently funded in increments. Funding for each year's activity is contingent upon the availability of funds from Congress and satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of the agency.

Multiple year award – a one-year funded award that disperses all funds in year one for a project period that may cover multiple years.

Grant applicants will need to provide assurances in their proposals that reflect applicable statutes, regulations, executive orders, and Office of Management and Budget circulars. Recipients will also need

to follow any terms and conditions subject to the award. Recipient award letters will identify provisions, terms, and conditions incorporated into awards. NOAA award letters commonly address the following:

- Department of Commerce financial assistance standard terms and conditions
- NOAA administrative standard award conditions
- Grants Online award action request guidance
- Special award conditions
- Line item budget
- Uniform administrative requirements related to the applicant’s organization type
- Cost principles related to the applicant’s organization type
- Audits related to the applicant’s organization type
- Department of Commerce pre-award notification requirements for grants
- Other provisions

Table 3.0. Common rules applicable to certain types of organizations

Regulations	State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments	Educational Institutions	Nonprofit Organizations and Individuals	Commercial Organizations
Uniform Administrative Requirements	15 CFR 24	15 CFR 14 (formerly A-110)	2 CFR 215	15 CFR 14 (formerly A-110)
Cost Principles	2 CFR 225 (formerly A-87)	2 CFR 220 (formerly A-21)	2 CFR 230 (formerly A-122)	48 CFR 31.2
Audits	A-133 (\$500K)	A-133	A-133	DCAA

NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria

Applicants should be aware that NOAA uses five standard evaluation criteria for its competitive assistance programs. A complete explanation of evaluation criteria and the selection process is outlined in all federal funding opportunities, specifically Section V, which is entitled, “Applicant Review Information.”

Evaluation Criteria for Projects

- Importance, relevance, and applicability of proposed project to the program goals. This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.
- Technical and scientific merit. This assesses whether the approach is technically sound or innovative, whether the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.
- Overall qualifications of applicants. This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
- Project costs. The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

- Outreach and education. NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the nation's natural resources.

Successful Grant Proposal Components

- Outline of a collaborative plan between the cooperator and the Coastal Services Center that makes effective use of each organization's strengths and capabilities.
- Cooperative agreement proposals have explicitly stated the roles and responsibilities of the NOAA Coastal Services Center, the cooperator, the cooperator's partners and how these roles will be collectively applied to an effective examination of coastal management issues; investigators have included a plan for the Center and the cooperator to work together to fully develop more detailed tasks early in the project when roles are unknown.
- An itemized budget and a detailed budget narrative of project costs, including labor, travel, supplies, and other costs.
- Description of a clear quality-control strategy.
- Details on how a broad range of coastal managers will use the products once the project is completed.
- Clear statement of the resulting impact of the project and products in the coastal management community. Information on developing and reporting on performance measures can be found in the April/May 2005 edition of *Coastal Connections*. More information about outputs and outcomes can be found in an on-line course maintained by the [University of Wisconsin-Extension](#). Section 2, "More about Outcomes," contains a wealth of information.