

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Office of Finance and Administration (NFA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC)

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2018 – 2020 - Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) Announcement Type: Initial

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NFA-NFAPO-2018-2005418

Dates: Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov up to 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time September 30, 2020. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding.

Notice of Funding Opportunity Description: This notice is not a mechanism to fund existing NOAA awards. The purpose of this notice is to request applications for special projects and programs associated with NOAA's strategic plan and mission goals, as well as to provide the general public with information and guidelines on how NOAA will select applications and administer discretionary Federal assistance under this Broad Agency Announcement (BAA).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Notice of Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

This Broad Agency Announcement is a mechanism to encourage research, education and outreach, innovative projects, or sponsorships that are not addressed through NOAA's competitive discretionary programs. This announcement is not soliciting goods or services for the direct benefit of NOAA. Funding for activities described in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2018, Fiscal Year 2019, and Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for any activities described in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to review an application beyond an initial administrative review, or to award any specific project, or to obligate any available funds.

B. Program Priorities

As an agency with responsibilities for maintaining and improving the viability of marine and coastal ecosystems, for delivering valuable weather, climate, and water information and services, for understanding the science and consequences of climate change, and for supporting the global commerce and transportation upon which we all depend, NOAA must remain current and responsive in an ever-changing world.

We do this in concert with our partners and stakeholders in Federal, state, and local governments and private organizations, applying a systematic approach that links our strategic goals through multi-year plans to the daily activities of our employees. Every year we are committed to re-evaluate our progress and priorities, look for efficiencies, and take advantage of new opportunities to improve our information, products, and services. In furtherance of this objective, NOAA issues this BAA for extramural research, innovative projects, and sponsorships (e.g., conferences, newsletters, etc.) that address one or more of the following four mission goal descriptions contained in the NOAA Strategic Plan:

1. Long-term mission goal: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

An informed society anticipating and responding to climate and its impacts.

Projected future climate-related changes include increased global temperatures, melting sea ice and glaciers, rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme precipitation events, acidification of the oceans, modifications of growing seasons, changes in storm frequency and intensity, air quality, alterations in species' ranges and migration patterns, earlier snowmelt, increased drought, and altered river flow volumes. Impacts from these changes are regionally diverse, and affect numerous sectors related to water, energy, transportation, forestry, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, and human health. A changing climate will alter the distribution of water resources and exacerbate human impacts on fisheries and marine ecosystems, which will result in such problems as overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, changes in species distributions, and excess nutrients in coastal waters. Increased sea levels are expected to amplify the effects of other coastal hazards as ecosystem changes increase invasions of non-native species and decrease biodiversity. The direct impact of climate change on commerce, transportation, and the economy is evidenced by retreating sea ice in the Arctic, which allows the northward expansion of commercial fisheries and provides increased access for oil and gas development, commerce, and tourism.

These changes already have profound implications for society, underscoring the need for scientific information to aid decision makers, develop and evaluate options that mitigate the human causes of climate change, and adapt to foreseeable climate impacts. While the Nation has made significant progress in understanding climate change and variability, more work is needed to identify causes and effects of these changes, produce accurate predictions, identify risks and vulnerabilities, and inform decision making. No single organization can accomplish these tasks alone. NOAA will advance this long-term goal of climate adaptation and mitigation as it builds upon a strong scientific foundation and decades of engagement with interagency, academic, and private sector partners to strengthen scientific understanding of climate; monitor changes in the atmosphere, oceans, and land; produce climate assessments; develop and deliver climate services at global and regional scales; and increase public knowledge of climate change and its impacts. Through its stewardship responsibilities and expertise, NOAA will improve its capacity to monitor, understand, and predict the impacts of a changing climate on weather patterns, water resources, and ocean and coastal ecosystems.

2. Long-term mission goal: Weather-Ready Nation

Society is prepared for and responds to weather-related events.

A weather-ready nation is a society that is able to prepare for and respond to environmental events that affect safety, health, the environment, economy, and homeland security. Urbanization and a growing population increasingly put people and businesses at greater risk to the impacts of weather, water, and climate-related hazards. NOAA's capacity to provide relevant information can help create a society that is more adaptive to its environment; experiences fewer disruptions, dislocation, and injuries; and that operates a more efficient economy.

Over the long-term, climate change may increase the intensity and even the frequency of adverse weather events, which range from drought and floods, to wildfires, heat waves, storms, and hurricanes. Changing weather, water, and climate conditions affect the economic vitality of communities and commercial industries, including the energy, transportation, and agriculture sectors. Environmental information aligned with user needs will become ever more critical to the safety and well-being of those exposed to sudden or prolonged hazards and is essential to sustain competitive advantage, expand economic growth, and to secure the Nation. All of the objectives within the Weather-ready Nation goal are highly dependent on progress toward the objectives under the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation goal. Likewise, progress toward this goal will benefit many of the objectives of the Healthy Oceans and Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies goals, and vice versa.

3. Long-term mission goal: Healthy Oceans

Marine fisheries, habitats, and biodiversity sustained within healthy and productive ecosystems.

Ocean ecosystems provide many benefits to humans. They provide food and recreational opportunities, and they support economies. Yet the resources that our marine, coastal, and Great Lakes environments present to us are already stressed by human uses. Habitat changes have depleted fish and shellfish stocks, increased the number of species that are at-risk, and reduced biodiversity. Because humans are an integral part of the ecosystem, declines in ecosystem functioning and quality directly impact human health and well-being. As long-term environmental, climate, and population trends continue, global demands for seafood and energy, recreational use of aquatic environments, and other pressures on habitats and over-exploited species will increase as will concerns about the sustainability of ecosystems and safety of edible fish. Depleted fish stocks and declines in iconic species (such as killer whales, salmon, and sea turtles) result in lost opportunities for employment, economic growth, and recreation along the coasts. In addition, climate change impacts to the ocean, including sea level rise, acidification, and warming, will alter habitats and the relative abundance and distribution of species. Climate change poses serious risks to coastal and marine ecosystems productivity, which, in turn, affects recreational, economic, and conservation activities.

NOAA's goal of healthy ocean ecosystems will ensure that ocean, estuarine, and related ecosystems and the species that inhabit them are vibrant and sustainable in the face of challenges. A strong understanding of these systems supports an ecosystem-based approach to management. The approach accounts for the complex connections among organisms (including humans); their physical, biotic, cultural, and economic environments; and the wide range of processes that control their dynamics. An ecosystem-based approach will assist policy makers to weigh trade-offs between alternative courses of action. By working toward the long-term sustainability of all species, NOAA will also help ensure for present and future generations that seafood is a safe, reliable, and affordable food source; that seafood harvest and production, recreational fishing opportunities, and non-consumptive uses of living marine resources continue to support vibrant coastal communities and economies; and that species of cultural and economic value can flourish.

4. Long-term mission goal: Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies

Coastal and Great Lakes communities are environmentally and economically sustainable.

The complex interdependence of ecosystems and economies will grow with increasing uses of land, marine, and coastal resources, resulting in particularly heavy economic and environmental pressures on the Nation's coastal communities. Continued growth in coastal populations, economic expansion, and global trade will further increase the need for safe and efficient maritime transportation. Similarly, the Nation's profound need for conventional and alternative energy presents many economic opportunities, but will also result in greater competition for ocean space, challenging our ability to make informed decisions that balance conflicting demands as well as economic and environmental considerations. At the same time, the interdependence of ecosystems and economies makes coastal and Great Lakes communities increasingly vulnerable to chronic and potentially catastrophic impacts of natural and human-induced hazards, including climate change, oil spills, harmful algal blooms and pathogen outbreaks, hypoxia, and severe weather hazards.

NOAA's long-term coastal goal will invigorate coastal communities and economies, and lead to increased resiliency and productivity. Comprehensive planning will help protect coastal communities and resources from the impacts of hazards and land-based pollution to vulnerable ecosystems by addressing competing uses, improving water quality, and fostering integrated management for sustainable uses. Geospatial services will support communities, navigation, and economic efficiency with accurate, useful characterizations, charts and maps, assessments, tools, and methods. Coastal decision makers will have the capacity to adaptively manage coastal communities and ecosystems with the best natural and social science available.

C. Program Authority

The specific program authority will vary depending on the nature of the proposed project. A list of the most prevalent assistance authorities are 15 U.S.C. 1540; 15 U.S.C. 2901 et. seq.; 16 U.S.C. 661; 16 U.S.C. 1456c; 33 U.S.C. 883a-d; 33 USC 893a; 33 U.S.C. 1442; 49 U.S.C. 44720(b).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

There are no funds specifically appropriated by Congress for this BAA. Funding for potential projects in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2018, Fiscal Year 2019, and Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for any proposed activities in this notice.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date of the award generally will be three to six months after receipt of the application by NOAA. Applications should generally be submitted for a one-year award period, but this may be negotiated if the application is recommended for funding.

Note: The award must start on the first day of a month in the year, and end on the last day of a month in the year (i.e. 08/01/2018 – 07/31/2019)

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applicants will either enter into a grant or a cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of NOAA's involvement in the project. Substantial involvement by NOAA in the project would require a cooperative agreement.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants may be institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, international or foreign organizations or governments, individuals, state, local, and Indian Tribal governments. Eligibility also depends on the statutory authority that permits NOAA to fund the proposed activity. Funding of Federal organizations is outside the scope of this announcement; if funding authority exists, Federal organizations seeking NOAA funds should contact relevant program officials about the interagency agreement process.

If the applicant is a university that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CI), the institution is encouraged to submit an application that will be associated with the CI.

The application must specify the name of the CI, its most recent award number, and the NOAA-approved research theme applicable to the work to be performed in the project narrative. The application will use the facilities and administrative rate (F&A or Indirect Cost Rate) associated with the most recent CI award.

If the application is selected for funding, NOAA will notify the university that a separate competitive award will be issued with its own award number.

However, the competitive award will include a Special Condition (SC) that evidences the link between it and the CI award. The SC will provide: (1) that the university has submitted the application to be associated with the CI; (2) that any existing University/NOAA memorandum of agreement (MOA) will be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award; and (3) that any progress report(s) for the competitive award must follow the timetable of and be submitted by the CI directly to the funding program. Copies of these progress reports will be attached to the CI's performance report as an appendix.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing is not required unless it is determined that a project can only be funded under an authority that requires matching/cost sharing funds.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can obtain electronic application packages through Grants.gov by using Notice of Funding Opportunity Number NOAA-NFA-NFAPO-2018-2005418 to conduct a search. Grants.gov requires applicants to register prior to submitting an application. Applicants must also register with System for Award Management (SAM). These registration processes can take several weeks and involve multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for these processes, applicants should register as soon as they decide to apply even if they are not ready to submit their application. **Please do not register in SAM as a "Private" entity.**

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Format Requirements.

All pages should be single-spaced and composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins on 8" x 11" paper. The project description may not exceed 15 pages, exclusive of title page, project synopsis, literature cited, budget information, resumes of investigators, and letters of support (if any). Failure to follow the requirements may result in the rejection of the application and its subsequent return.

Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out.

2. Content Requirements.

The following information must be included:

- a. Signed SF-424: The SF-424 must be signed by the Authorized Representative. Electronic signatures submitted through Grants.gov satisfy this requirement.
- b. Title Page (1-page limit): The title page identifies the project's title, total budget, start and end dates; and the Principal Investigator's (PI's) and co-PI's names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers and fax numbers. The title page must also identify the specific NOAA office (e.g., NESDIS, NMFS, NOS, NWS, OAR or Office of Education) and the NOAA program targeted by the application.
- c. Project Synopsis (1-page limit): It is critical that the project synopsis accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the activities. It is imperative that potential applicants tie their applications to one of the NOAA mission goals described in Section I.B. of this announcement and state it here in the synopsis.
- d. Project Description (15-page limit): The applicant should describe and justify the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described below in Section V. Project descriptions should include clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving those objectives, including methods, timelines, and expected outcomes.
- e. Literature Cited: If applicable
- f. Assurances: The SF-424B must be completed and submitted for all non-construction applications, and the SF-424C must be completed and submitted for all construction applications.
- g. Completed Form CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.
- h. Resumes for each major participant: Key Personnel; Principal Investigator(s).
- i. Standard Application Forms: Please refer to the application package available through Grants.gov. Please review each form to determine which are required with submission. Each applicant may not be required to submit all forms listed, depending on the project type or applicant type.
- j. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire: NOAA has a NEPA policy applicable to funding applicants, described in Section VI of this announcement. NOAA has a NEPA Questionnaire that may be applicable to some projects, but applicants do not need to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at this time.

However, NOAA may require additional information from the applicant regarding potential environmental impacts prior to reviewing the application.

k. Data Management Plan: If relevant for the proposed project, include a data sharing plan. Refer to Section VI.

l. Budget and Budget Justification: The SF-424A must be completed, and there should be a detailed budget justification accompanying the SF-424 budget forms (SF-424A non-construction or SF-424C construction, as appropriate). Indicate matching funds if provided in a separate column. Provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification should be broken out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424 budget form (SF-424A or SF-424C). Budget Narrative Guidance can be found at: <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html>. Applicants requesting indirect costs at a rate greater than the de minimus 10% must provide a signed copy of their organization's existing approved Federal indirect cost (IDC) rate agreement with the application package.

m. Indirect Costs: If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, the applicant may choose to negotiate a rate with its cognizant agency (the agency from which the applicant receives the most grant funding), or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). Applicants requesting indirect costs at a rate greater than the de minimus 10% must provide a signed copy of their existing approved Federal indirect cost (IDC) rate agreement with the application package. If an applicant seeks to establish a new indirect cost rate agreement and NOAA would be the cognizant agency, the applicant must submit its indirect cost rate agreement documentation per the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (2017), http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf, within 90 days after award start date or those costs will not be allowed. The approval process may take several weeks. The indirect cost rate applications in these cases should be sent by regular mail or email (separately from the grant application) to:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway
9th Floor, Room 9328
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Phone: 301.628.1308 Email: lamar.revis@noaa.gov

For applicants seeking to establish a new indirect cost rate agreement and NOAA would be the cognizant agency, the information that must be provided (separate from the application) to establish an Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is described below:

Submitted by Non-Profits and Commercial Entities

1. A chart showing the organizational structure during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the organization. Please make sure this includes a brief narrative background statement outlining the financial operation of the organization.

2. The basic proposal including all other supporting schedules and financial and statistical information supporting the basic proposal. Any supporting schedules should be cross-referenced to the basic proposal (accounting records and related work papers to support the costs contained in the indirect cost proposal).

a. The total costs shown in the basic proposal should also reconcile to the financial statements in the most recent audit report, which should also be provided.

b. Reconciliations/Analyses

i. As stated above, detailed reconciliation between the proposal and the financial statements;

ii. Adjusted detailed trial balance which agrees to the audited financial statements;

iii. Trend Analysis Report - It must itemize expense account line items that support the totals of both direct and indirect expenses, for three years (only two years would be required if the entity has only been in business for two years). Comparisons or trends of the indirect cost rates only will cause your indirect cost proposal to be rejected, until the correctly prepared trend analysis report is received; and

iv. Calculations showing how applicable prior year carry-forward amounts were applied to formulate current year's rate submission.

3. A listing of directly awarded grants and contracts by Federal agency, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, dollar amounts separated by direct-indirect-total costs, period of performance, applicable cost principle, and the identification of any cost limitations and special award terms/conditions applicable to each.

4. Cost Policy Statement (e.g. Disclosure Statement) the purpose of which is to establish an unambiguous understanding between the grantee and the Federal Government as to what costs will be charged directly and what costs will be charged indirectly. If a Cost Policy Statement was submitted with last year's proposal and not proposing any changes to the current year's submission, the following suggested language should be included in their transmittal letter when a proposal is submitted: [ABC Organization] hereby confirms that no changes to its accounting practices as set forth in its Cost Policy Statement dated [date] have been made.

5. Statement of Total Costs contains all line items of cost included in the organization's chart of accounts and applicable columns for direct costs (by cost center/activity, Federal grants, non-Federal grants, fund raising, etc.), indirect costs (overhead, G&A, etc.), and unallowable costs (if applicable). These columns should show the type (e.g. labor, travel supplies, etc.) and amount of cost incurred by each activity. The total costs should reconcile to the organization's financial statements. If the reconciliation is not clear, the organization should provide a separate schedule supporting the difference.

6. Statement of Indirect Costs contains all line items of cost included in the indirect cost pool(s), the applicable base(s), and the resulting indirect cost rate(s). The allocation base should be traceable to the organization's total costs. If not clearly traceable, an additional schedule should be provided to support the reconciliation.

7. Specific Personnel Costs includes a list of all volunteers by job title, along with a description of the services they provided to the organization, if significant. Also required is a list of all management level employees, their position descriptions and salaries.

8. Certification of Indirect Costs - A completed Certification must be signed on behalf of the organization by an official at a level no lower than Executive Director or Chief Financial Officer. The Certification must identify the period of coverage for the indirect cost proposal, asserting that it has been prepared in accordance with the applicable cost principles and guidelines [2 CFR Part 200 (non-profits), FAR Part 31 (commercial)].

9. Identification of Other Items to be included within the indirect cost proposal package. If these items are not provided with the organization's proposal, it may be necessary for them to be provided later during the review process as circumstances dictate.

- a. Identify assets purchased with Federal sponsored program funds or Non-Federal sponsored program funds, if any, and specify if ownership remains with sponsoring entity or transfers to recipient upon successful completion of the awards.
- b. Identify all related party transactions.
- c. Identify idle facilities, if any.

10. Lobbying Certificate – A completed Certification must be signed on behalf of the organization by an official at a level no lower than Executive Director or Chief Financial Officer. Completion of this Certification indicates the organization has complied with the requirements and standards on lobbying costs in the development of the indirect cost rate.

11. DOC's Indirect Cost Proposal Checklist. Please mark the Checklist item number on the corresponding document (or start of section) within the final proposal package.

Follow this link to view a copy of the IDC Proposal Checklist:

<https://rates.psc.gov/fms/dca/icpchecklist.pdf>

Submitted by State and Local Governments

All entities receiving this Guidance desiring to claim indirect costs under Federal awards using an indirect cost rate must prepare and maintain their completed indirect cost rate proposal for review, as set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Grants.

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

Each applicant is required to:

- (i) Register in SAM before submitting an application;
- (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and
- (iii) 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 NOAA (or any other Federal agency).

NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA 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.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications can be submitted on a rolling basis starting from the publication date of this Broad Agency Announcement up to 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time on September 30, 2020. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Applications shall be evaluated for funding generally within three to six months of receipt. An applicant can expect to receive either a rejection notice based on the initial prescreening review (if found ineligible), a rejection notice based on merit review or program restrictions, a request for additional information, and/or an award within that timeframe.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments 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 16 on the SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372.

To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOCs are listed in the Office Management and Budget's home page at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

F. Funding Restrictions

None. Unless required by the statute under which the award is funded.

G. Other Submission Requirements

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number will vary depending on the nature of the proposed project. The applicant should consult the CFDA series 11.400 - 11.481 as well as 11.008, 11.011, and 11.012 and select from the subset of CFDA's applicable to this BAA to select the most accurate program for the proposed project. The CFDA will also provide the reader with the eligibility requirements in order to determine if an applicant can apply under that particular CFDA. Link to the catalog for NOAA programs

https://www.cfda.gov/index?s=program&mode=list&tab=list&tabmode=list&_so_list_froma345e59a09d0aa1d5eef16228ddd7b4c=0&_so_list_froma345e59a09d0aa1d5eef16228ddd7b4c_page=1:

CFDA Line Office	CFDA Line Office	CFDA Line Office
11.008 OED	11.437 NMFS	11.460 NOS/OAR
11.011 OAR	11.438 NMFS	11.462 NWS
11.012 NOS	11.439 NMFS	11.463 NMFS/NOS
11.400 NOS/NMFS	11.440 NESDIS	11.467 NWS
11.417 OAR	11.441 NMFS	11.468 NWS
11.419 NOS		11.472 NMFS/NOS
11.420 NOS	11.444 NMFS	11.473 NOS
11.426 NOS	11.445 NMFS	11.477 NMFS
11.427 NMFS		11.478 NOS
11.429 NOS		11.480 NOS
11.430 OAR	11.452 NMFS	11.481 OED
11.431 OAR	11.454 NMFS	
11.432 OAR	11.455 NMFS	
11.433 NMFS	11.457 NMFS	
11.436 NMFS	11.459 OAR	

Please refer to Section VII-- Agency Contacts for a list of NOAA Personnel.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

NOAA has standardized evaluation criteria for all competitive assistance announcements. The criteria for this BAA are listed below. Applicants are required to adhere to all the noted submission requirements and to provide a demonstrable link and/or to emphasize the manner in which study objectives results relate to NOAA's mission goals/priorities. Since applications responding to this BAA may vary significantly in their activities/objectives, assigning a set weight for each evaluation criterion is not feasible, but is based on a total possible score of 100. The Program Office and/or Selection Official will determine which of the following criteria and weights will be applied. Some applications, for example sponsorships, may not be able to address all the criteria like technical/scientific merit. However, it is in your best interest to prepare an application that can be easily evaluated against these five criteria. When applicable, an applicant's Data Sharing Plan, as described in Section VI of this announcement, will be considered within the criteria below.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the mission goals:

This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities: i.e., How does the proposed activity enhance NOAA's strategic plan and mission goals? Applications should also address significance/possibilities of securing productive results, i.e., Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field? What effect will the project have on improving public understanding of the role of the ocean, coasts, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem?

Applications may also be scored for innovation, i.e., Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?

2. Technical/scientific merit:

This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications should address the approach/soundness of design: i.e., Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the audiences to be engaged through the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?

This criterion should also address the applicant's proposed methods for monitoring, measuring, and evaluating the success or failure of the project, i.e., What are they? Are they appropriate?

Additionally, if needed, a data sharing 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.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants:

This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. If appropriate, applications should also address the physical environment and collaboration, if any, i.e., Does the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed experiments or activities take advantage of unique features of the intended environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

4. Project costs:

The budget is evaluated to determine if the cost is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. 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. NOAA assesses whether this project aligns with NOAA's education vision, for an informed society that uses ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate science to make the best social, economic, and environmental decisions. Evaluation of these criteria will include if the project addresses any of the goals or employ any of the strategies of the NOAA Education Plan (<http://www.noaa.gov/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan>), as well as how the outcomes of the project will be communicated to NOAA and the interested public.

B. Review and Selection Process

NOAA will conduct an initial administrative review to determine eligibility for award, compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. This review includes determining whether:

1. Sufficient funds are available in the budget of the program office receiving the application to support the proposed project;

2. Statutory authority exists to provide financial assistance for the project or organization;

3. A complete application package has been submitted, that is, all required elements of the application are included and application follows format requirements;

4. The Project Description/Narrative is consistent with one or more of NOAA's mission goals;

5. If the application falls within the scope of an existing NOAA competitive announcement (Federal Register Notices can be found at www.Grants.gov to find recent competitive announcements) or duplicates an existing nondiscretionary project announced or awarded in FY 13, FY 14, FY 15, FY 16, FY17, FY 18, FY 19, or FY 20, then it cannot be funded under this announcement;

6. The work in the application does not directly benefit NOAA (if it will, it should be supported by a procurement contract, not a financial assistance award which cannot be funded under this announcement, as provided in 31 U.S.C. 6303).

C. Additional Information

1. Applications not passing this initial review will not be considered further for funding through this BAA, and will not receive further review. NOAA will evaluate application(s) that pass this initial review and comply with all the requirements under this BAA individually (i.e., applications will be not compared to each other). A merit review will be conducted by mail reviewers and/or peer panel reviewers. Each reviewer will individually evaluate the application(s) using the evaluation criteria provided above; a minimum of three merit reviewers per application is required. More than three reviewers may be used based on the complexity of the application. The reviewers may be any combination of Federal and/or non-Federal personnel. Reviewers may discuss an application, but if more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, the application(s) will be individually scored (i.e., a consensus is not reached). Otherwise, the Program Officer has the discretion to authorize a score based on consensus. NOAA selects evaluators on the bases of their professional qualifications and expertise as related to the unique characteristics of the application. The NOAA Program Officer will assess the evaluations and make a fund or do-not-fund recommendation to the Selecting Official with an explanation of the reasons for the recommendation.

The selection official shall provide a rationale for funding the application and shall address any comments provided by the reviewers. Any applicant considered for funding may be required to address the issues raised in the evaluation of the application by the reviewers, Program Officer, Selecting Official, and/or Grants Officer before an award is issued.

2. Applications not selected for funding in FY2018, FY2019, or FY2020, may be considered for funding from FY2021, but may be required to revalidate the terms of the original application or resubmit in the next BAA cycle if one is published for FY2021. The Program Officer, Selecting Official and/or Grants Officer may negotiate the final funding level of the application with the intended applicant. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendation for award to the NOAA Grants Officer who is authorized to commit the Federal Government and obligate the funds.

C. Selection Factors

Not Applicable.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be made three to six months after receipt by NOAA of the full application. Given this time frame, applicants applying in Fiscal Year 2018 should take into consideration that submissions received after March 31, 2018 may not be able to be awarded in FY2018 (October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018). Submissions received after March 31, 2019 may not be able to be awarded in FY2019 (October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019). Similarly, submissions received after March 31, 2020 may not be able to be awarded in FY2020 (October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020)

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award (CD-450) is executed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing award document. It is generally provided electronically via NOAA's Grants Online system to the Authorized Representative of the recipient organization. The Authorized Representative for a successful applicant will accept the award via the Grants Online system. NOAA will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

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 and may be accessed online at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/12/30/2014-30297/departments-of-commerce-pre-award-notification-requirements-for-grants-and-cooperative-agreements>

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

3. Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. This document can be found at

http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf

4. Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions

For awards designated on the CD-450 award cover sheet as Research, the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and the Federal-Wide Research Terms and Conditions as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a Special Condition.

5. Limitation of Reliability

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

6. Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments, and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns

In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

7. National Environmental policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or applications 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, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq>.

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 application. 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.

8. Review of Risk

After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Management Division will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. 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.

9. Data Sharing Plan [Only if IV.B. states environmental data is expected].

- (1) 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.

(2) Applications 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 application 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 application 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.

(3) NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded applications, 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.

(4) Application 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.

10. Indirect Cost Rate – See section IV.B above.

11. Minority Serving Institutions

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

12. 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, 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 the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer identified in the award and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the Program Officer. Unless otherwise specified by terms of the award, program and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually.

Program reports should include progress on identified milestones. Unless otherwise specified by the terms of the award, reports must be submitted electronically through NOAA Grants Online (<https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>).

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsr.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Daniel Namur

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Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282

National Ocean Service (NOS)

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1305 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring MD 20910-3281

National Weather Service (NWS)

Carla Kirby
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Phone: 301-427-6923
Building: SSMC2 Room: 18366
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Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283

Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR)

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1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring MD 20910-3282

NOAA Office of Education (OED)

Carrie McDougall
carrie.mcdougall@noaa.gov
Phone Number: 202-482-0875
Bldg: HCHB Room: 6863
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington DC 20230-0001

National Environmental Satellite Data Information Service (NESDIS)

Satya Kalluri
satya.kalluri@noaa.gov
Phone Number: 301-683-3510
5825 University Research Court
Building: M Square
College Park, MD 20740

VIII. Other Information

Grants.gov

Potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks or more to complete. Applicants must allow sufficient registration time to ensure applications are submitted before the application submission deadline. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (formerly Central Contracting Registry (CCR)). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.)

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.015). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours three email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application.

The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, the second will confirm the submission is acceptable and timely, and the third will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors.

After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another email when the application has been downloaded by the grantor agency.

Audit Costs

Audits shall be performed in accordance with audit requirements contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements found in 2 CFR part 200, Subsection F. Recipients expending \$750,000 or more in Federal funds during the recipient's fiscal year must conduct a single audit in accordance with guidelines outlined in 2 CFR §§200.500-.520. For-profit organizations not covered by the audit requirements in 2 CFR §§200.500-.520 are subject to the audit requirements set forth in the terms and conditions of the award. Recipients that expend less than \$750,000 during the recipient's fiscal year in Federal awards are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in 2 CFR §200.503, but records must be available for review or audit by appropriate officials of the Federal agency, pass-through entity, and Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Applicants are also reminded that other audits may be conducted by the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General and by other authorized Federal agencies.