

NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

participating in program broken down by key demographics, number of workers who complete the program broken down by key demographics, number of workers placed into jobs broken down by key demographics, average wages of job placements, average wage growth of job placements, retention of workers placed, amount spent on wraparound services, and total average cost spent per worker.

- Section 5b. Describe anticipated program design and program implementation projects. Anticipated Program Design and program implementation projects should connect to the funding request under Section 5a. Depending on the needs of the region and the current status of existing workforce training efforts, these projects might include:
 - The development of outreach and recruitment plans for employers.
 - The development of outreach and recruitment plans for workers, including plans to reach diverse and underserved communities.
 - The development of training models and curricula.
 - Purchase of necessary equipment to support and expand existing workforce training projects.
 - Timeline for design and training
 - For successful applicants, NOAA expects training will begin within 12 months of the project start date.
 - Section 5c. Identify any anticipated barriers to worker participation and how you plan to mitigate the impact of those barriers. Describe any wraparound services that will be provided to workers to ensure they are able to participate in employer-driven skills training programs and how you will ensure the program is sustainable, including any support provided to workers after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, subsequent professional development).
- vi. Section 6: Sharing results and knowledge sharing
- Clearly describe what products will result from the project. This may include curricula, media, methods.
 - Provide a clear plan for how results of this work will be transferable and shareable.
 - At a minimum, NOAA expects that results will contribute to the NOAA Climate Resilience Toolkit through submission to

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NOAA's Digital Coast (<https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/>)

- Additionally, recipients will be expected to share approaches, results, and challenges at an annual recipient conference to be convened by NOAA.

b. Professional Qualifications (does not count against page limit)

- i. Include resumes for key personnel. Resumes should be no more than two pages each.
- ii. Provide a summary of current or pending support to the applicant team.

c. Required supporting documents (does not count against page limit)

- i. Letters of support from core partners
- ii. Documentation of the employer commitments

d. Non-profit certifications (does not count against page limit)

If the Backbone Organization is a non-profit organization that is not an institution of higher education:

- i. A copy of the organization's articles of incorporation,
- ii. A copy of the organization's bylaws, and
- iii. A current certificate of good standing.

e. Optional Supporting Documentation (does not count against page limit)

As noted above, NOAA recognizes that regions have different needs with respect to multi-sector regional workforce recruitment systems (i.e., one region may need to design and organize a system from the ground up, while another region may have an existing system). Therefore, applicants may (but are not required to) submit supporting documentation to appropriately supplement the Project Narrative. Such supporting documentation will not count against the Project Narrative page limit, but applicants should clearly label supporting documentation and make clear to NOAA which section of the Project Narrative any supporting documentation is designed to supplement. For instance, an applicant may (but is not required to) submit:

- i. A memorandum of understanding or agreement (MOU or MOA) between the relevant groups to supplement Section 2 of the Project Narrative.
- ii. A documented process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these skills training programs (e.g., past experience, sample training curriculum) to support Section 4 of the Project Narrative.
- iii. Existing workforce training curricula to support Section 4 of the Project Narrative.

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These examples are illustrative only; applicants may (but are not required to) submit other appropriate supporting documents as well.

- f. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire** (OMB Control No. 0648-0538; does not count against page limit)
This announcement is not seeking proposals that will have an environmental impact. Therefore, an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire is not required as part of the proposal.
- g. Data Management Plan**
This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the proposal.
- h. Budget Narrative**
The budget narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justification) in the following order and format. Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justifications must be included for each individual project within an application. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found at:
https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf
- i. Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)**
Sea Grant 90-4 forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form should be completed for each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Years 1-4). The Sea Grant 90-4 form can be downloaded at:
<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>
- ii. Budget Justification**
For each year of the project (or each individual project within an application), a budget justification is required. Each budget justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each budget justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 form, as appropriate.
- iii. Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)**
If indirect costs are included in the project budget, the applicant must include documentation to support the indirect cost rate it is using (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). For most applicants, this will entail the submission of a copy of its current, approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA).

If the applicant does not have a current or pending NICRA, it may propose indirect costs in its budget; however, the applicant must prepare and submit an allocation

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plan and rate proposal for approval within 90 days from the award start date (unless claiming the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, discussed below). See 2 C.F.R. part 200 Apps. III, IV, V, VI, VII for guidance. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to NOAA's Office of Regional Affairs (or applicable cognizant Federal agency). If the applicant chooses to pursue this option, it should include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current or pending NICRA and will submit an allocation plan and rate proposal to NOAA or the applicant's cognizant Federal agency for approval.

In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), an applicant that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (unless the applicant is a state or local unit of government that receives less than \$35 million in direct federal funding per year, discussed below). No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate; however, an applicant electing to charge a de minimis rate of 10

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percent must include a statement in its Budget Narrative that it does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate and is electing to charge the de minimis rate.

Note that if the applicant is a State or local unit of government that receives less than \$35,000,000 in direct Federal funding per year it may submit any of the following:

- A Certificate of Indirect Costs from the Department of the Interior (DOI) or Economic Development Administration (EDA);
- Acknowledgment received from NOAA and Certificate of Indirect Costs in the form prescribed at 2 C.F.R. pt. 200, app. VII;
- Cost Allocation Plan approved by a Federal agency (note that cost allocation plans or indirect cost rates approved by state agencies are **not** acceptable); or
- NICRA.

i. Overall Application

In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or on the [Sea Grant website](#). These include:

i. **SF-424 Form** (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)

This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution’s accurate UEI and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

ii. **SF-424A Form** (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006)

This form, titled “Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs,” must describe the entire funding period (broken out by year if multi-year) in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year with separate columns for each year of federal funding as well as each year of non-federal funding. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A form, Extra Section B should be used (see below). This form should be used to only document federal funding and concomitant official cost share. Do not use it for other forms of leveraged funds or in-kind support.

iii. **Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B**

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>, OMB Control No. 4060-0006)

The SF-424A form described above only includes space to report the applicant’s yearly federal and non-federal dollars over two years. If the application includes more than

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two years of federal and non-federal dollars, please complete the additional SF-424A, Extra Section B to report the yearly non-federal matching fund budget of the grant. This form should be used to only document federal funding and concomitant official cost share. Do not use it for other forms of leveraged funds or in-kind support. *This form is an outlier and will be added to the “Budget Narrative Attachment” section on Grants.gov, as described in Section IV. C. 2.*

iv. **SF-424B Assurances** (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007)

The form, titled “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs,” must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

v. **CD-511** (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce)

The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.

vi. **SF-LLL** (optional; Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046)

The form, titled “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee, if appropriate, such as if the applicant has retained a registered lobbyist in conjunction with the proposed project.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

If this is your organization’s first time applying for Federal Financial Assistance, this critical element can take a month or more (see section IX.A.) and is outside of NOAA’s purview. Begin the SAM application process as soon as you think you might want to apply. If you have not applied recently, check on whether your SAM account is still active.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
2. Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its 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.

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

A. Submission Dates and Times

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Letters of Intent must be received via email by the Competition Manager (sg.grants@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on **Thursday, November 30, 2023**.

Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by **11:59 p.m.** Eastern time on **Tuesday, February 13, 2024**.

B. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the National Sea Grant College Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

C. Funding Restrictions

NOAA may allow up to 90-days pre-award spending. Applicants that need such reimbursement should work closely with NOAA to determine if their pre-award costs may be considered for reimbursement. For pre-award costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the applicant must competitively procure services pursuant to the Federal government's procurement procedures. All pre-award costs are incurred at an applicant's own risk and will be considered for reimbursement, in NOAA's sole discretion, only if an applicant receives an award and such costs are approved by NOAA in writing. Under no circumstances will NOAA be held responsible for application preparation expenditures, which are distinguished from pre-award project costs.

D. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

After NOAA reviews an application, NOAA may contact the applicant to request any necessary additional documentation to clarify or substantiate submitted application materials, depending on the type of project proposed. Examples of additional documentation may include, but are not limited to, title verification, documentation of the value of in-kind contributions, evidence that all funding is available and committed to the project, or documentation required for environmental or legal compliance. This additional documentation will be required to ensure the proposed project complies with all applicable rules and regulations prior to NOAA's issuance of an award. NOAA will provide applicants a reasonable amount of time to provide any additional documentation. Failure to provide complete and accurate supporting documentation in a timely manner when requested by NOAA may result in the denial of an application.

NOAA may, in its discretion, make changes or additions to this NOFO. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov.

V. Application Review Information

Throughout the review and selection process, NOAA reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed. NOAA may additionally ask applicants to

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clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements. NOAA will screen submitted materials to verify that all required forms are complete, and all required documentation is included. Applications that do not contain all elements listed in Section IV.B. will not be reviewed.

A. Evaluation Criteria

All complete applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria below. Each criterion is worth 0-5 or 0-10 points. The applicant will be evaluated on plans for or the demonstration of:

- a. Overall Alignment with Priorities (5 points)** - The project's alignment with NOAA's Program Priorities.
 - Be consistent with NOAA's strategic focus to build climate resilient communities make equity central to our work, and accelerate economic growth in support of the agency's mission of science, service, and stewardship.
<https://www.noaa.gov/organization/budget-finance-performance/value-to-society/noaa-fy22-26-strategic-plan>
 - Projects must support placement or promotion into good jobs that enhance climate resilience.
 - Work collaboratively to grow regional workforces and their associated economies by (a) co-developing new or (b) enhancing existing training programs that meet the existing and emerging skills needs of employers.
- b. Identification of Regional and Sectoral Needs (5 points)** – The application will be reviewed from a worker skills training perspective and based on how the project will address these needs, including:
 - Assessment of the region's economic state (e.g., level of distress, unemployment) and employer hiring needs (e.g., in-demand industries, vacancies, and worker roles);
 - Identification and justification of climate-resilience skills needed based on relevant current and projected climate impacts on economic, employer, and worker needs for the project;
 - Identification of specific, existing, or employer-projected needs by employers who are engaged in the sector partnership(s) or regional workforce recruitment system;
 - Proposed plan for how the project will address these needs by providing good jobs that enhance climate resilience.
- c. Proposed Approach (10 points)**
 - Partnership development, including the process to gather skills needs from employers and translate these needs into effective training models and a demonstrated ability to implement these climate resilience and related skills training programs.

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- Training model and development specific to industries/sectors and worker roles related to climate resilience. If the proposal is for program design or program implementation, this evaluation will include the strength of the sector partnership or system.
 - Skill-based hiring training for employers in the partnership/system.
 - How the applicant proposes to leverage other funds and/or in-kind support.
 - Worker and employer outreach and recruitment.
 - Wraparound services to support worker participation in the skills training program.
 - Measurement and tracking of outcomes and metrics.
 - The likelihood that plans and forecasted workers served and job placements that enhance climate resilience will be completed in the grant period within budget.
- d. Project costs (5 points)**
- The budget is necessary and sufficient to carry out the project
 - The costs per worker placed are reasonable and reflective of the time and expertise required to train them
 - Costs for wraparound services are clear and reasonable
- e. Climate Resilience Workforce Skills (10 points)** – How well the proposed climate resilience skills determined by the applicant in their partnerships, will support climate resilience.
- f. Backbone Organization’s Capacity (10 points)** – The applicant’s ability to:
- Convene relevant groups: must submit commitment letters from relevant employers and strategic partners in the project and articulate what role they will fill, including executive sponsorship.
 - Incorporate climate resilience information: must demonstrate the ability to use the best-available climate science and resilience principles in the context of the proposed project, all in alignment with the Steps to Resilience (<https://toolkit.climate.gov/#steps>).
 - Establish a track record of success: provide documented evidence (including data describing outcomes) of coordinating across sectors/partners and driving them to action.
 - Show capacity to leverage other funds or in-kind support: outline plan to leverage and administer other funds or in-kind support for the proposed project.
 - Demonstrate past fundraising experience.
 - Reach underserved and under-resourced communities: outline plan to reach a diverse set of underserved and under-resourced workers, as well as past outreach, recruiting, and service experience.
 - Provide adequate staff support: describe staffing plan and include biographies for essential team members and their associated roles for

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the proposed project.

- g. Employer Partnerships (10 points)** – Employer partnerships secured or plans to secure employer partnerships that address climate resilience concerns in a region, sector, or community and lead to good job placements that enhance climate resilience in those identified priority areas. Provide details on

 - The type of training program they are building,
 - What employers will be committing to the partnership/system (e.g., skills needs data, job placement commitments)
 - What benefits they will receive from the partnership/system (e.g., skills-based hiring training, access to qualified workers, portable industry-recognized credentials, earn and learn training).
- h. Employer Commitments (10 points)** - The number and quality of employer commitments in the context of the stage of development of the partnership.

 - Quality of commitment letters from employers (e.g. specificity, scope, certainty)
 - Likelihood of actual hires resulting from the commitment
 - Plans to secure additional employer commitments, if appropriate
- i. Job Placements Expected (10 points)** – Expected number of workers served, job placements or promotions during grant period (based on partnerships with community-based organizations, worker-serving organizations, and employers).

 - Projected number of individuals recruited for the training program(s) with target demographic breakdown.
 - Projected number of good job placements or promotions and how many are committed by employers.
 - Time from award to initial job placements.
 - Details about the jobs that employers are committing to hire or promote workers (e.g., key responsibilities, wages, benefits, union membership).
 - Projected training cost per worker (inclusive of provision of wraparound services).
 - Evidence of durability of job placements or promotions.
- j. Strategic Partnerships (10 points)** - The development and strength of other partnerships essential for the project to succeed. Examples include:

 - NOAA partnerships, including NOAA-funded organizations. Where possible, NOAA intends to augment NOAA’s Digital Coast (<https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/>) with training that can be replicated and shared with other sectors and regions. In addition, NOAA will seek to expand the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit (<https://toolkit.noaa.gov>) so that others may learn from and apply lessons learned from successful projects.
 - Non-NOAA government partners
 - Institutions of higher education, especially including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, other Minority-Serving Institutions, or community colleges.

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- Other groups, as appropriate, such as AmeriCorps or the Corps Network
- k. Co-Investment and Sustainability (10 points)**
 - Availability and commitment of funds such as:
 - State and local government
 - Philanthropy
 - Industry
 - Other sources of investments to support the ongoing sustainability of the partnership/system after the lifecycle of the grant
 - The amount of local leverage that will augment the federal award
 - The project's alignment with and integration into other public or private investments currently ongoing or planned for the community and region.
 - Sustainability also includes the applicant's plan for providing ongoing support for participants after completion of the training (e.g., job placement support, subsequent professional development).
 - Size of credibly projected income gains for workers and number of new good jobs or promotions.
 - Commitment by community-based organization to sustain the work of the partnership.
- l. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (10 points) – The strength of the application's plan for ensuring that the project's benefits are shared among affected communities, employers, and workers.**
 - This includes the extent to which the application demonstrates the ability to serve trainees that benefit from federal and state programs like SNAP, TANF, and WIC.
 - NOAA heavily weights efforts to meaningfully engage the affected public, as evidenced by broad public engagement. Such engagement may include but is not limited to historically underserved populations and areas, such as:
 - Communities of color, including: Black, Latino, Indigenous and/or Native American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and other person of color
 - Women
 - Disconnected youth
 - Members of religious minorities
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
 - Veterans
 - Military spouses
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Persons in recovery
 - Persons with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants

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- Persons who live in rural areas
- Persons adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review.

All complete applications will be reviewed by at least three individuals and scored against the Evaluation Review criteria above. NOAA anticipates funding approximately 10 to 20 awards to the highest scoring projects after application of selection factors described in Section V.C below.

The proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will also be reviewed by the program manager to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions.

The NOAA staff may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the merit or administrative correctness of the application, and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

- Availability of funding.
- Balance/distribution of funds:
 - geographically
 - by type of institution
 - by type of partners and/or sectors
 - by project types
 - Whether the project will advance the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of these investments flow to Justice40 communities, as identified by the CEJST (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>; https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CP_O.pdf).
- Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.
- Program priorities and policy factors.
- Applicant's prior award performance.
- Partnerships with and/or participation of targeted groups.
- Timeline for placing workers in good jobs.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Applicants

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may be asked to answer questions, and/or modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets (including overall funding level) to address the issues raised by the reviewers, the competition manager, the Selecting Official, or the Grants Officer before an award is made. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be announced in June 2024 and start no earlier than August 1, 2024.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification when the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA grants officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the authorizing official and the lead of the project electronically. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected. Anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be available to all applicants by request, regardless of whether they were selected to be funded.

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.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

(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 <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

(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 granting system and is also available at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/external_links.html, as well as https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20C%20onditions%20-%202012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf

(4) Limitation of Liability - 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

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Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

(5) 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 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 White House 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.

(6) Review of Risk - After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. 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.

(7) Data Sharing Plan - 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. Proposals submitted in response to

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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. 3. 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. 4. 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.

(8) Indirect Cost Rate - If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the MTDC base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements.

The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

(9) 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.

(10) 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

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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.

(11) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA-Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at:

<https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Mar/1330-52.222-70%20NOAA%20Sexual%20Assault%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment%20Prevention%20and%20Response%20Policy%20%28except%20for%20services%20for%20the%20use%20of%20a%20vessel%29%20%281%29.pdf>.

C. Reporting

1. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

All recipients are required to submit financial, progress, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award, generally no less than semi-annually. All project progress and financial reports must be submitted to the applicable NOAA program officer in an electronic format to be determined at the time of award.

2. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 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 over \$30,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170.

3. Government Performance and Results Act

- a. Internal NOAA Evaluation: As a condition of the grant award, NOAA will require additional data on activities, outputs, and actual impact of the funded investment, in part to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). NOAA anticipates that recipients will be expected to track their engagement activities within the scope of work, with project beneficiaries, and other project relevant groups. NOAA further anticipates

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recipients will be expected to collect data, using surveys of beneficiaries or clients if necessary, on the outputs and outcomes of their activities, such as the number of new employer partnerships formed, or the number of workers placed.

- b. Third Party Evaluation: As a condition of a grant award, grantees are required to participate in a NOAA-funded third-party evaluation, if undertaken by NOAA. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcome analysis of all or selected sites/components within or across grantees, and/or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive/have received program services or into control group(s) that would not/has not received program services or program services). NOAA may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to:
 - i. make records available to an evaluation contractor or contractors on participants, employers, and funding;
 - ii. provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and
 - iii. in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and
 - iv. follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor(s) under the direction of NOAA.

VII. Agency Contacts

The National Sea Grant Office mailing address is:

NOAA Sea Grant
1315 East-West
Highway Silver Spring,
MD 20910
sg.grants@noaa.gov

NOAA's website at www.noaa.gov provides additional information on NOAA and its programs.

VIII. Other Information

A. Applicant Webinar

Potential applicants are encouraged to check Sea Grant's national website at

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<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding> for information about a webinar and other resources related to this announcement.

B. Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

C. Right to Use Information

The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other federal employees, and also by federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

D. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4. These regulations set forth rules for the department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

E. Non-Guarantee of Funding

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding

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opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

F. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by NOAA (or any of its operating units) and may be considered grounds for any or all the following actions:

- a. Establishing an account receivable;
- b. Withholding payments to the recipient under any NOAA award(s);
- c. Changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only;
- d. Imposing other specific award conditions;
- e. Suspending any active NOAA award(s); and
- f. Terminating any active NOAA award(s).

G. Certifications Required by Annual Appropriations Acts for Corporations and for Awards over \$5 Million

- a. As discussed in section IV.C, all applicants are required to be registered in SAM before applying under this NOFO. SAM requires registering entities to certify compliance with all limitations imposed by annual appropriation acts. For corporations, this certification includes that the corporation:
 - i. Was not convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; and/or
 - ii. Does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.
- b. For financial assistance awards in excess of \$5 million, this certification includes

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that the entity:

- i. To the best of its knowledge and belief, has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification;
- ii. Has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and/or
- iii. Has not been notified, more than 90 days prior to certification, of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding.

H. Non-Relocation Specific Award Condition

For the purposes of this NOFO, if an application is selected for award, the recipient will be required to adhere to a specific award condition relating to the following non-relocation policy as follows:

- a. In signing this award of financial assistance, Recipient(s) attests that NOAA funding is not intended by the Recipient to assist its efforts to induce the relocation of existing jobs within the U.S. that are located outside of its jurisdiction to within its jurisdiction in competition with other U.S. jurisdictions for those same jobs. If NOAA determines that its assistance was used for those purposes, NOAA retains the right to pursue appropriate enforcement action in accord with the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Award, including suspension of disbursements and termination of the award for convenience or material noncompliance, which may include the establishment of a debt requiring the Recipient to reimburse NOAA.
- b. For purposes of ensuring that NOAA assistance will not be used to merely transfer jobs from one location in the United States to another, each applicant must inform NOAA of all employers that constitute primary beneficiaries of the project assisted by NOAA. NOAA will consider an employer to be a “primary beneficiary” if the employer is specifically named in the application as benefitting from the project, and the applicant estimates that the employer will create or promote 50 or more permanent jobs as a result of the investment assistance (if the jobs in question were originally located in a smaller community, NOAA may extend this policy to the relocation of 25 or more jobs).

I. Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the Uniform Guidance (see 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart F, “Audit Requirements”). The Uniform Guidance requires any non-Federal entity (i.e., non-profit organizations, including non-profit institutions of higher education and hospitals, States, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends Federal awards of \$750,000 or more in the

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recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Uniform Guidance.

J. **Non-Discrimination and Equal Access by Those with Past Criminal Histories**

Consistent with certifications made during the SAM registration process, grant recipients must administer skills training programs funded under this NOFO in compliance with Federal statutes related to non-discrimination. Further, recipients must not discriminate against participants in skills training programs funded under this NOFO with past criminal records including justice-impacted and reentry participants.

K. **Demographics Information:**

NOAA will not provide collected demographics information of applicants to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.

- i. Please provide the following anonymous information for all named collaborators on your proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035) You may use [this optional form](#) for collecting the information.
- ii. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? Check all that apply.
 - A. Black
 - B. Latino
 - C. Indigenous and/or Native American
 - D. Asian American
 - E. Pacific Islander
 - F. Other person of color
 - G. Members of religious minorities
 - H. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
 - I. Persons with disabilities
 - J. Persons who live in rural areas
 - K. Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
 - L. No, I do not identify with any of these groups

IX. Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov

The most up-to-date instructions for application submission via Grants.gov can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. To begin, complete, and submit your application:

- Navigate to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>;
- Click "Search for Opportunity Package";

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- In the “Funding Opportunity Number” field, enter “NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007783”;
- Click “Search”;
- Click “Apply”;
- Enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates from Grants.gov regarding this grant opportunity) or check the box that indicates you do not wish to provide it, then click “Submit”;
- Choose to apply using Workspace by clicking “Login to Apply Now” or choose to download the legacy application package by clicking “Download Package”; and
- Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.

A. Register Early and Submit Early.

In order to submit an application through <http://www.grants.gov/> (Grants.gov), an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between **three to five business days** or **as long as four weeks** if all steps are not completed correctly. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their System for Award Management (SAM), which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, registration up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

1. Pre-Submission Registration

Before submitting a Full Application under this NOFO, each applicant must both register with Grants.gov and register its Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) with Grants.gov. Applicants should note that this process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations not affiliated with NOAA, and requires confirmation at each step.

- Create a **Grants.gov** Username and Password
 - Same Day
- Obtain an **EIN**
 - 10 Business Days
- Authorize the **AOR**
 - Same Day (depending on your organization's EBiz POC)
- Register with **SAM and obtain or verify your organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)**
 - 7-10 Business Days
 - <https://www.sam.gov/>
- Track **AOR Status**
 - Same Day

Applicants may have already completed one or more of the steps set forth above (e.g., applicants may have already registered with Grants.gov, in which case they do not need to re-register). However, note

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that applicants that have not completed any of the above steps may require 23 or more business days to complete the required steps serially. Grants.gov is a centrally-managed Federal grants portal, and changes or updates to the process outlined above may occur after the publication of this NOFO.

Prospective applicants should visit

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> to ensure that they follow the most up-to-date instructions.

B. AOR Requirement

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at Grants.gov so please ensure that your organization's application is submitted by an AOR. **If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected by the Grants.gov system and cannot be considered by NOAA.** Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

C. Field Limitations and Special Characters

Please be advised that [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

D. Verify That Your Submission Was Successful

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

An applicant should expect to receive two initial emails from Grants.gov: the first will confirm receipt of the application, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to NOAA or has been rejected due to errors. It can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error. Applicants will receive a third email once NOAA has retrieved their applications.

NOAA requests that applicants refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package.

Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that NOAA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact NOAA

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using the contact information in Section VII to inquire if NOAA is in receipt of the applicant's submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, navigate to <https://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Track My Application" link under the "Applicants" tab. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov and an agency tracking number assigned. If your application has a status of "Received" it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. For more detailed information on why an application may be rejected, please see "Encountering Error Messages" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html> and "Frequently Asked Questions by Applicants" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

E. Grants.gov System Issues

If you experience a Grants.gov system issue (i.e., a technical problem or glitch with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission in a timely manner, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726 for assistance; and (iii) contact NOAA using the contact information in section VII of this NOFO. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are **not** considered system issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to, e.g., (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are **not** considered system issues. A Grants.gov systems issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed systems issue, NOAA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format.

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," applicants may try contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on Federal holidays.