

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Office of the Under Secretary (USEC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Strengthening the Public's and/or K-12 Students' Environmental Literacy for Community Resilience to Extreme Weather Events and Environmental Changes

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-SEC-OED-2015-2004408

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.008, NOAA Mission-Related Education Awards

Dates:

The deadline for full applications is 11:59:59 pm EDT on April 13, 2015 (Note that NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM EDT).

Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted. Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system and with SAM.gov prior to submitting an application. These registration processes can take several weeks and involve multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Applications submitted through Grants.gov are automatically date/time stamped when they are validated and submitted to the Agency. PLEASE NOTE: When submitting through Grants.gov, you will receive 2 emails. An initial email will be sent to confirm your attempt to submit an application. This is NOT a confirmation of acceptance of your application. It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application and send you a second email. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp.

Two informational webinars with the program officers will occur on March 9, 2015 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EDT and March 10, 2015 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EDT. By 12:00 PM EST on March 6, 2015, interested applicants should register by contacting oed.grants@noaa.gov and including in the Subject line of the email: "Register for ELG15 FFO Webinar" and providing the interested

party's name, institution, telephone number, and email address. You will receive an email response from oed.grants@noaa.gov with the login information and date for the webinar. Whenever possible, individuals from the same institution should try to join the webinar from the same computer/phone line.

Funding Opportunity Description:

The goal of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is to strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience to extreme weather events and environmental changes. Many U.S. communities face significant environmental changes, natural disasters, or economic disruptions ([U.S Department of Commerce FY2014-FY2018 Strategic Plan](#)). Projected future environmental changes include increased global temperatures, more frequent heat waves, rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme precipitation events, acidification of the ocean, modifications of growing seasons, changes in storm frequency and intensity, alterations in species' ranges and migration patterns, earlier snowmelt, increased drought, and altered river flow volumes ([NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan, 2010](#); [The Third National Climate Assessment, 2014](#)). Communities must increase their resilience now and build a long-term foundation for resilience in the future.

Projects should build the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness and an understanding of Earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location. In order for communities to become more resilient, their members must have the ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically. Projects will be based on the latest science about the threats and vulnerabilities facing communities and consider socio-economic and ecological factors. NOAA will consider funding a wide range of project types, but all projects must actively engage participants in learning about and addressing real-world issues. Projects must utilize NOAA's vast scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. In order to facilitate the use of NOAA's assets, projects are strongly encouraged to involve partnerships with relevant NOAA entities (offices, programs, etc.) and/or NOAA employees and affiliates. NOAA's education website (www.education.noaa.gov) and an additional list of relevant assets (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html) provide links to NOAA datasets, potential NOAA partners, and other resources connected with many of these topics.

Project topics must relate to NOAA's mission in the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate sciences and stewardship and should focus on one or more of the goals of NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/goals/>): healthy oceans; weather-ready nation; climate adaptation and mitigation; and resilient coastal communities and economies.

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to institutions of higher education; other nonprofits, including informal education institutions such as museums, zoos, and aquariums; K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; and state, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States. For-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply. Eligible applicants may submit an individual application or submit as part of a collaborative team of two or more eligible institutions.

Proposed projects must be between 2 and 5 years in duration and have total federal requests of \$250,000 to \$500,000 for all years of the project. It is anticipated that awards funded under this announcement this fiscal year will be made by September 30, 2015 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2015. Note: Links to this announcement and other helpful information for applying are available at <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding>.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

1. Overview

NOAA's Environmental Literacy Grants (ELG) Program supports increased understanding and use of environmental information to promote stewardship and informed decision making by a diverse pool of educators, students and the public. Improving the public's environmental literacy, its understanding of how our Nation's natural resources are managed, and its understanding of the importance of these resources is critical to meeting the Agency's science, service, and stewardship mission. To address this mission and to create a pipeline to meet future workforce needs, NOAA engages in and supports formal and informal education activities at local, state, regional, and national levels.

This solicitation of the Environmental Literacy Grants program supports NOAA's Education Strategic Plan (www.education.noaa.gov/plan) and the goals of both NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp>) and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Strategic Plan (http://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2014/march/doc_fy2014-2018_strategic_plan.pdf).

The goal of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is to strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience to extreme weather events and environmental changes. Many U.S. communities face significant environmental changes, natural disasters, or economic disruptions (U.S Department of Commerce FY2014-FY2018 Strategic Plan). Projected future environmental changes include increased global temperatures, more frequent heat waves, rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme precipitation events, acidification of the ocean, modifications of growing seasons, changes in storm frequency and intensity, alterations in species' ranges and migration patterns, earlier snowmelt, increased drought, and altered river flow volumes ([NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan, 2010](#); [The Third National Climate Assessment, 2014](#)). Communities must increase their resilience now and build a long-term foundation for resilience in the future.

NOAA’s vision of the future comprises healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies that are resilient in the face of change ([NOAA’s Next Generation Strategic Plan, 2010](#)). To this end, NOAA develops and applies sound science to support the Nation in making the best informed social and environmental decisions, taking into account the interests of society, future generations, and ecosystems. These decisions require understanding uncertainty and involve economic, aesthetic, cultural, and ethical considerations (NOAA Education Strategic Plan, 2009). Thus, resilient communities require a scientifically informed and engaged public. Leaders in Earth system science education echo this need, stating that public understanding of Earth’s interconnected systems is crucial to our ability to apply knowledge and problem-solving skills to real-world issues ([Hoffman and Barstow, 2007](#)). With regard to disasters, a recent report from the National Academies states: “To create a culture of resilience, public education and communication are important to help shift the way that Americans perceive themselves in relation to disasters and ensure that the lessons learned from our history with disasters stay active in the public’s consciousness.” (National Academies, 2012, p. 136)

2. Description of Project Activities

Projects should build the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness and an understanding of Earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community’s location. In order for communities to become more resilient, their members must have the ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically. Projects will be based on the latest science about the threats and vulnerabilities facing communities and consider socio-economic and ecological factors. NOAA will consider funding a wide range of project types, but all projects must actively engage participants in learning about and addressing real-world issues. Projects must utilize NOAA’s vast scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. In order to facilitate the use of NOAA’s assets, projects are strongly encouraged to involve partnerships with relevant NOAA entities (offices, programs, etc.) and/or NOAA employees and affiliates. NOAA's education website (www.education.noaa.gov) and an additional list of relevant assets (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html) provide links to NOAA datasets, potential NOAA partners, and other resources connected with many of these topics.

Project topics must relate to NOAA's mission in the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate sciences and stewardship and should focus on one or more of the goals of NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/goals/>): healthy oceans; weather-ready nation; climate adaptation and mitigation; and resilient coastal communities and economies.

There has been a significant increase in the number of reports, analyses, and tools that assist individuals, communities, and governments in addressing resilience to extreme weather events and environmental change. These assets could be better utilized by the education community to create learning opportunities based on current data. Below is a list of some of the most relevant resources that may serve as background material or be fully incorporated into an education project.

Climate Interpreter

<http://climateinterpreter.org/>

Community Resilience Index

<http://masgc.org/coastal-storms-program/resilience-index>

Georgetown Climate Center's Adaptation Clearinghouse

<http://www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/clearinghouse>

Increasing Community Resilience to Extreme Weather-Related Events

[http://www.aquariumofpacific.org/downloads/Extreme Weather Related Events Report.pdf](http://www.aquariumofpacific.org/downloads/Extreme_Weather_Related_Events_Report.pdf)

National Climate Assessment

<http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>

National Drought Mitigation Center

<http://drought.unl.edu/>

National Sea Grant Resilience Toolkit

<http://seagrant.noaa.gov/WhatWeDo/ResilienceToolkit.aspx>

NOAA Digital Coast

<http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/>

NOAA Nuisance Flooding Report

http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/publications/NOAA_Technical_Report_NOS_COOPS_073.pdf

NOAA Weather-Ready Nation

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/>

Ready

<http://www.ready.gov/>

U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit

<http://toolkit.climate.gov>

Projects may be implemented on local to regional scales, but all projects should evaluate which components of the project may be applicable to projects in other places. Also, projects should consider engaging with local community foundations on resilience projects.

Community foundations often serve as conveners for local and diverse stakeholders issues. You may find this community foundation locator useful: <http://www.cof.org/community-foundation-locator>.

Applications that propose the expansion or enhancement of a previously funded project that meets the requirements of this funding opportunity are eligible. However, the applicants must explicitly demonstrate the significant accomplishments of the previous award and how the project will significantly improve, and/or build on the previous award.

3. Target Audiences

The target audiences for this funding opportunity are: the broader public, K-12 students, and may also include informal educators (including interpreters and docents), and formal educators (pre- or in-service, and including school administrators). Higher education students and professionals working in the area of community resilience are not a target audience for this funding opportunity. Projects focused on engaging public audiences should involve individuals who represent multiple sectors of society.

There is an interest in projects that reach groups traditionally underrepresented in Earth System science and groups from underserved communities, which are often the most vulnerable to the risks associated with extreme weather events and environmental change (Kersten et al., 2012).

4. Characteristics of a Successful Project

- Specific characteristics that a successful project under this funding opportunity will exhibit include the following:
- Advances NOAA's mission
- Addresses the goal of this funding opportunity to build the environmental literacy necessary to increase community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness

and an understanding of Earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location

- Increases participants' ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically
- Is based on the latest science about the threats and vulnerabilities facing communities and considers socio-economic and ecological factors
- Is educationally and technically sound
- Is based on established best practices tailored to the activity type and to the specific target audience(s)
- Actively engages participants in learning and addressing real-world issues
- Fills an identified need and has clearly stated outcomes and objectives that are measurable and appropriate to the target audience(s).
- Utilizes NOAA's scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets
- Increases awareness and use of NOAA resources among target audiences
- Includes a plan for robust project evaluation during the award period that will assess outcomes on the target audience
- Shares information on project outcomes and design with NOAA and the appropriate broader science education communities
- Includes PIs, co-PIs, and key personnel who are appropriately qualified and have clearly defined responsibilities

- Includes a well justified and sufficiently detailed budget

Additionally, a successful project under this funding opportunity may exhibit the following characteristics where appropriate:

- Includes partnerships with NOAA entities and/or involves NOAA employees and affiliates to facilitate use of NOAA assets.
- Is informed by activities previously funded by NOAA's Environmental Literacy Grants Program (See http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/elg_award_search.php).
- Involves groups traditionally under-represented in Earth system science and/or from under-served communities.
- Leverages existing networks of institutions to achieve the goals of the project.
- Utilizes community resilience action or other similar plans for the areas served by the project.
- Provides detail on applicability of implementation at other scales or in other places of similar scale (for very small scale projects).
- Integrates practices, crosscutting concepts, and/or core ideas from NRC's Framework for K-12 Science Education (www.nationalacademies.org/bose/Standards_Framework_homepage.html)
- Aligns activities to the principles in:
 - "Ocean Literacy: Essential Principles of Ocean Sciences" (<http://www.coexploration.org/oceanliteracy/documents/OceanLitChart.pdf>)
 - "Great Lakes Literacy: Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts for Great Lakes Learning" (http://www.coseegreatlakes.net/downloads/brochure_GL_Literacy.pdf)
 - "Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts for Atmospheric Science Literacy" (<http://eo.ucar.edu/asl/pdfs/ASLbrochureFINAL.pdf>)

--"Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science"
(<http://www.globalchange.gov/browse/educators>)

--"Estuary Principles & Concepts"
(<http://estuaries.noaa.gov/Teachers/Default.aspx?ID=180>)

--"Energy Literacy: Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts for Energy Education"
(http://downloads.globalchange.gov/Literacy/Energy_Literacy_1.0_High_Res.pdf)

5. Project Structure and Management

Projects may be funded through a single award to an institution with sub-awards to project partners or through collaborative awards, whereby project funding is split among two or more awards to institutions that are partnering on a single project. See Section IV.B, Content and Form of Application, for additional guidance regarding single-institution and collaborative applications.

Projects funded through multiple collaborative awards should have a clear management structure and decision-making process that specifies the roles of each collaborative applicant and key personnel. Applicants may choose their preferred method for managing their collaborative team and should explain the management structure in their project narrative. One applicant from a collaborative team must be designated as the lead institution for the purpose of submitting applications (see Section IV.B. below). A collaborative team may also assign this institution a leadership role in coordinating the project. Alternatively, collaborative teams may form a leadership committee that is responsible for overall coordination of project activities. Once funded, documentation showing approval from all collaborating institutions must be provided for any major project changes, including but not limited to changes in key personnel, project scope, or budget.

If any portion of the project will be conducted through consultants, subcontracts and/or sub-awards, you must follow the requirements set out at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.330 through 200.332, as applicable. If you select a consultant, subcontractor and/or sub-awardee prior to submitting an application, indicate the process that you used for selection and provide a statement of his/her qualifications or background.

6. Project Evaluation

Project descriptions should include robust evaluation plans. Evaluation plans should include measurement of the project's effectiveness in meeting the project goals and objectives as well as the goal of this funding program. Plans for formative and summative project evaluations should be well constructed and should use best practices for evaluating the type of project. Discussion of both formative and summative evaluations should be included in the project description and in the budget section. Project evaluation should include assessment of changes in the target audiences' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors as a result of the activities undertaken. The impact of the proposed project on the target audiences must be measurable during the award period. Potential impacts of the project beyond the award period should be described. During the award period, reports of both outputs and outcomes for a project will be expected. Projects should be based on an existing front-end evaluation/needs assessment and there should be a description of that needs assessment in the project description. Applicants are encouraged to provide a logic model or theory of change for their proposed project.

Project evaluation should be handled by external professional evaluators or by internal staff who have significant experience with each type of evaluation and are not otherwise substantively involved with the project.

To further inform the broad fields of K-12 and informal science education about what was learned from the project, applicants are encouraged to develop appropriate project dissemination strategies. Project teams are encouraged to engage their peers in active discussion of relevant best practices. This may or may not be best accomplished by attending and presenting at annual meetings of professional societies. Principal Investigators (PIs) must provide summative project evaluation reports to NOAA. If applicable, PIs may also post evaluation reports to www.informalscience.org and include any resulting instructional products and materials in the National Science Digital Library (NSDL) Science and Math Informal Learning Educators (SMILE) Pathway (www.howtosmile.org).

7. Awards Dates and Mission Goal

NOAA anticipates that awards under this announcement will be made by September 30, 2015 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2015. Note: Links to this announcement and other helpful information for applying is available at <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding>.

This FFO meets NOAA's four Mission Goals: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation, Weather-Ready Nation, Healthy Oceans, and Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies (www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/goals/).

8. Definitions

Earth System Science: An integrated approach to the study of Earth that stresses investigations of the interactions among Earth's components in order to explain Earth dynamics, evolution, and global change. (Source: [NASA's Earth Observatory Glossary](http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Glossary/index.php?mode=alpha&seg=e), <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Glossary/index.php?mode=alpha&seg=e>).

NOAA Assets: Resources, services, or sites that are used to support NOAA's mission and to communicate NOAA research, data, information, and knowledge to the public. These include education materials and programs, datasets and visualizations, subject matter experts, facilities, and managed natural resource areas. A partial listing of NOAA assets can be found at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html. A summary of NOAA programs and activities sorted by the state or territory in which they are based or focused is available at: www.legislative.noaa.gov/NIYS/. A summary of NOAA resources in various regions of the country is available at: www.education.noaa.gov/Special_Topics/NOAA_in_Your_Backyard.html. NOAA assets incorporated into education materials can be found at www.education.noaa.gov.

Outcomes: The changes that show movement toward achieving ultimate goals and objectives - e.g., the number of persons who, as a result of their participation in a project,

demonstrate changes in: awareness and knowledge of specific concepts and/or issues; interest in and/or attitudes toward certain issues, careers, or courses of action; and behavior or skills. Outcomes may be changes that occur in the short term (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations); medium term (e.g., practices and behaviors); or long term (e.g., social, economic, and environmental conditions). (Source: adapted from the Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education Projects (p.35, http://informalscience.org/documents/Eval_Framework.pdf.)

Outputs: The immediate results of an action (e.g., services, events, and products) that document the extent of implementation of a particular activity. They are typically expressed numerically - e.g., the number of educators involved in a capacity-building project or the number of professional development workshops held. (Source: adapted from the Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education Projects (p.35, http://informalscience.org/documents/Eval_Framework.pdf.)

Resilience: The capacity of a community, business, or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption. (U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 2014, <http://toolkit.climate.gov/get-started/overview>)

9. References

Friedman, A. (Ed.). (2008). Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education

Projects. [online] URL: http://insci.org/resources/Eval_Framework.pdf.

Hoffman, M. and Barstow, D. April 2007. Revolutionizing Earth System Science Education for the 21st Century, Report and Recommendations from a 50-State Analysis of Earth Science Education Standards. TERC, Cambridge MA.

Kersten, E., Morello-Frosch, R., Pastor, M., Ramos, M., 2012. Facing the Climate Gap:

How Environmental Justice Communities Are Leading the Way to a More Sustainable and Equitable California. Program for Environmental and Regional Equity. University of Southern California. URL: <http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/facingtheclimategap/>

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2009). Education Strategic Plan 2009-2029. URL: http://www.education.noaa.gov/plan/09_NOAA_Educ_Strategic_Plan_Color.pdf

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National Research Council. (2009). Learning Science in Informal Environments: People, Places, and Pursuits. Committee on Learning Science in Informal Environments. P. Bell, B. Lewenstein, A.W. Shouse, and M.A. Feder (Eds.). Board on Science Education, Center for Education. Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

National Research Council. (2012). A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. Committee on a Conceptual Framework for New K-12 Science Education Standards. Board on Science Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

National Research Council. (2012). Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative.

Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

U.S. Department of Commerce. (2014). FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. URL: http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/NOAA_NGSP.pdf

B. Program Priorities

Refer to I.A., Program Objective. There are no other program priorities.

C. Program Authority

Authority for this program is provided by the following: 33 USC 893a, as amended by the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Reauthorization Act of 2010 ("America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010"), Pub. L. 111-358, § 302.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates the availability of approximately \$2,000,000 of total Federal financial assistance in FY 2015 for this solicitation. Approximately 4 to 8 projects will be funded in the form of cooperative agreements in FY 2015. NOAA reserves the right to hold over a subset of applications that do not receive funding in FY 2015 for consideration in FY 2016. NOAA's Office of Education plans to focus on building the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience during the next few years of the Environmental Literacy Grants Program.

Proposed projects must be between 2 and 5 years in duration and have total federal requests of \$250,000 to \$500,000 for all years of the project. It is anticipated that awards funded under this announcement this fiscal year will be made by September 30, 2015 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2015.

The total Federal amount requested from NOAA for each project must be no less than

\$250,000 and no more than \$500,000 for all years of the project, including direct and indirect costs. Any project (collaborative or single institution submission) requesting total Federal support from NOAA of less than \$250,000 or more than \$500,000 total for all years will not be considered for funding.

The combined total budget request should not include any funding that would support NOAA partners in the project, including the personnel involved and the activities and tasks that they will undertake. Any costs associated with these activities that go beyond in-kind support will be handled internally by the Office of Education; these costs may not exceed 10% of the total federal request for the proposed project. See Section IV.B.1(f) for details regarding how to document potential NOAA costs.

The amount of funding available through this announcement will be dependent upon final FY 2015 and FY 2016 budgetary decisions. Publication of this notice does not obligate DOC/NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement from an authorized NOAA Grants Officer, the applicant does so solely at his/her own risk of such costs not being included under the award. Pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless approved by the NOAA Grants Officer in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.308(d) and 200.458. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives.

Applications to renew or supplement existing awards will not be accepted. Multi-year funding may be considered for programs or long-term awards where funding for the subsequent year(s) is anticipated but not provided at the time the initial award is approved and where the estimated budget for future funding periods can be forecast with some degree of reliability.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications must cover a project period of two to five years to be eligible for merit review. Start dates can be October 1, 2015 or later. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through cooperative agreements under the terms of this notice. Applications funded through cooperative agreements will include substantial involvement of the Federal government which may include, but is not limited to, liaison activities between the grantee and NOAA personnel who are contributing data or expertise to the project. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the successful applicant and NOAA representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to institutions of higher education; other nonprofits, including informal education institutions such as museums, zoos, and aquariums; K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; and state, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States. For-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply. Eligible applicants may submit an individual application or submit as part of a collaborative team of two or more eligible institutions.

There are no eligibility restrictions on institutions that are serving as project partners but are not submitting an application. These partners can receive a portion of the funding through sub-awards or, for NOAA partners, through direct support from the Office of Education. Note: Although NOAA programs and offices can receive a small amount of support from the Office of Education to facilitate their involvement with the project, the principal benefit of the project cannot be to support NOAA (see Section II.A. and Section IV.B.1(f)).

An individual may apply only once as a Principal Investigator (PI) through this funding opportunity, and the same application may not be submitted to more than one priority. However, institutions may submit more than one distinct application and individuals may serve as co-PIs or key personnel on more than one application. Federal employees may not serve as PIs or co-PIs on any application, although they may be included as key personnel.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no cost share requirement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

See sections IV. B. and C. below.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks and involves multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their System for Award Management (SAM) registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration [CCR]) may need to be renewed or updated prior to submitting to Grants.gov. (Note that your CCR username will not work in SAM; you must create a new SAM User Account to renew or update your registration.) Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan accordingly to avoid late submissions. For further information please visit the SAM web portal (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

Each applicant must be registered in Grants.gov. If any applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov or uploading the application into the Grants.gov system, they should contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

PLEASE NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp.

B. Content and Form of Application

Each applicant must submit an application through Grants.gov. Failure of an applicant to

submit an application before the deadline will result in the project not being merit reviewed or receiving any additional consideration. See the Office of Education's frequently asked questions site: www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/faq_page.html for additional guidance during the preparation of applications.

1. Required Elements for Applications

(a) **FORM:** The page margin on standard letter-size paper should be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right. All pages should be numbered. The typeface should be standard 11-point size or larger and must be clear and easily legible. Color or high-resolution graphics, unusually sized materials, or otherwise unusual materials submitted as part of the application are allowed, but should be employed only when necessary for adequate description of the proposed project. All narrative sections of the full application should be single spaced and consist of the elements described in Section IV.B.1.

Please use the title page template from this URL: www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html. The PI listed on each title page should be affiliated with the institution submitting the application.

CONTENT: Applications must include all elements (a) through (i) below; elements (j) and (k) are optional. Collaborative applications should ensure that the application submitted by the lead institution includes all elements (a) through (i) below; elements (j) and (k) are optional. Failure to provide this information in the required form and within prescribed page limits will result in the application being excluded from further review. Any non-requested elements submitted as part of an application package will be removed from the application prior to merit review.

(a) **Required Forms.** At the time of full application submission, all applicants must submit the following forms with signatures of the Authorized Representative of the submitting institution. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.):

(i) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

- (ii) SF-424-A, Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs
- (iii) SF-424-B, Assurances, Non-Construction Programs
- (iv) CD-511, Certifications Regarding Lobbying
- (v) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable; see instructions on Only the versions of these forms available in Grants.gov are acceptable.

(b) Title Page. Please use the title page template available at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html. The title page should identify the funding opportunity to which you are applying, the project's title, and the Principal Investigator (PI) and co-PI names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers. The PI listed on the title page should be affiliated with the institution submitting the application. The proposed start and end dates for the project and requested budget should also be included on the title page. The title page should also contain an executive summary of the project that does not exceed 150 words and should be a concise overview of the objectives of the project, the project activities, the location of the project, the expected outcome(s), and the rationale for the work proposed. Project summaries of applications that receive funding may be posted on program- related websites and/or sent to members of Congress.

(c) 15-page Project Description. The project description section must not exceed 15 pages and must follow the requirements in IV.B.1, Content and Form of Applications. Page limits are inclusive of figures and other visual materials, but exclusive of title pages, budget information, references, work plan/milestone chart, data sharing plan, resumes, description of NOAA involvement, current and pending support, and letters of commitment. A template for the project description can be found online at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html.

The proposed project must be described completely. The project description should clearly describe the project's goals, implementation, and management. It should provide a full justification/rationale for the project. Specifically, this section should include:

- (i) The objective(s), expected outcomes (see definition in Section I.A.8), and an explanation for how the activities and expected outcomes support the goal of this funding

program and advance NOAA's mission, as described in section I.A;

(ii) Description of the proposed activities, including: all activities that will be undertaken and/or products that will be created; the need for those products or activities; and the process that will be used to develop, implement, and evaluate all activities and products. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the proposed project is informed by best practices and should cite appropriate literature references that support the proposed approach;

(iii) A discussion of the project's geographic scale and target audience(s) that specifically identifies whether the audience(s) is (are) K-12, public, or both. If the proposed project will reach underserved or underrepresented groups, this should be indicated;

(iv) A discussion of how the proposed project incorporates ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and/or climate sciences and reflects or addresses the Ocean Literacy, Great Lakes Literacy, Climate Literacy, Atmospheric Science Literacy, Energy Literacy, and/or Estuary Principles & Concepts, as applicable;

(v) A description of the project partners' roles and the coordination among project partners; specifically, highlight any partnerships involving NOAA assets (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/elg/NOAA_assets.html). (NOTE: letters of commitment articulating project partners' roles should be submitted as a separate section of the application. Also, additional details of NOAA involvement are provided in IV.B.1(f) below);

(vi) A discussion of the institutional profiles and capabilities of the applicant and other partner institutions, as well as the project management structure;

(vii) A description of how the project will incorporate NOAA data, data access tools, and/or other NOAA assets into the project activities (for a partial listing of NOAA assets, see http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html);

(viii) A description of whether or not community resilience plans (or other similar plans) exist for the project area, and if so, how the project is aligned with these plans.

(ix) A description of how the project activities will be evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting stated project goals and objectives as well as the goal of this funding opportunity. Also discuss who will carry out the evaluation, and, if the evaluator is part of the applicant institution, verify that he/she is not otherwise substantively involved in the project. See Section I.A.6 for further guidance on project evaluation;

(x) A description of the qualifications and capabilities of the personnel that will be involved in the project;

(xi) A description of how project results will be disseminated beyond the audience immediately involved in the activities of the project and how awareness and use of NOAA resources will increase.

(d) Proposed Work Plan/Milestone Chart. In a chronological fashion, indicate the tasks to be completed by the applicant and other project partners, including specific project deliverables. Provide a timeline of major tasks and potential outcomes covering the duration of the proposed project, including project evaluation. The tasks should relate both to the budget and to the intended deliverables or activities. There is no page limit for this element.

(e) Brief Resumes. For all Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs) listed on the applicants title page, provide resumes of no more than 3 pages per person that include a list of professional and academic credentials. Resumes of additional key personnel from applicant institutions and project partners are optional but recommended, as this will help reviewers to assess the applicants' qualifications.

(f) Description of NOAA Involvement in Project. Describe the involvement of any NOAA partners in the project, including the personnel involved and the activities and tasks that they will undertake. Include a description of any costs associated with those activities that go beyond in-kind support from their NOAA office and will require financial support from the Office of Education. These costs cannot exceed 10% of the total federal request for

the proposed project. The description of these costs should provide enough detail to allow the Office of Education staff and the review panel to evaluate the reasonableness and appropriateness of these costs. Costs can include salaries, travel, equipment, contractual and/or any other costs directly supporting the NOAA project partner(s). These costs should not be included in the Title Page, SF-424, SF-424A, or the project budget table and narrative and do not count toward the budget minimum and maximum described in section II.A, (Funding Availability). If there is no NOAA partner, this must be clearly indicated on a separate page under a heading, "Description of NOAA Involvement in Project". There is no page limit for this element.

(g) Current and Pending Support. Describe all current and pending Federal and non-Federal funding, including application(s) to this funding opportunity, for all PIs and co-PIs listed on the title page. The capability of the designated PIs and co-PIs to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects must be assessable. Therefore, please list the percentage of time the individuals have committed to other Federal or non-Federal grant-funded projects. If any PI or Co-PI has no current or pending funding, this must be clearly indicated on a separate page under a heading "Current and Pending Support". There is no page limit for this element. A template for summarizing Current and Pending Support can be found online at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html.

(h) Budget. Applications must include a budget that contains both a detailed table and a narrative, in addition to the required official budget form (SF-424A). Both the table and the narrative should use the same categories as shown on the SF-424A form.

The Budget Section should provide enough detail to allow Office of Education staff and the review panel to evaluate the level of effort proposed by investigators and staff on the project. The budget must include all applicant expenses anticipated in order to realistically describe for reviewers what resources will be necessary to carry out the project. When appropriate, the narrative and table must provide details on:

-Personnel salaries and fringe benefits (specifying the salary plus the percent of time and/or number of months devoted to the project for every individual to be paid by the project).

-Travel including per person and per trip costs for transportation, lodging, and meals. Applicants should request funding to allow the PI(s) to attend PI conferences every year during the life of the award. Travel costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem, or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the non-Federal entity's non-federally-funded activities and in accordance with non-Federal entity's written travel reimbursement policies. In the absence of an acceptable, written non-Federal entity policy regarding travel costs, the rates and amounts established under 5 U.S.C. 5701-11, ("Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances"), or by the Administrator of General Services, or by the President (or his or her designee) pursuant to any provisions of such subchapter must apply to travel under Federal awards (48 CFR 31.205-46(a)) Federal travel per diem rates: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>

-Equipment and supplies, if applicable. See 2 C.F.R. 200.313 and See 2 C.F.R. 200.314 for additional guidance on equipment and supplies costs

-Contractual costs, such as anticipated sub-awards. If sub-contracts or sub-awards will be made to project partners or others, the same amount of budget detail provided for the applicant institution's activities (broken down by the categories shown on the SF-424A form) should be provided for each sub-award. If any portion of the project will be conducted through consultants, subcontracts and/or sub-awards, you must follow the requirements set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.330 through 200.332, as applicable. If you select a consultant, subcontractor and/or sub-awardee prior to submitting an application, indicate the process that you used for selection and provide a statement of his/her qualifications or background.

-Other costs, including printing, publications, evaluations, and communication expenses.

-Indirect costs, if applicable. As defined at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.65, indirect costs, which are sometimes referred to as facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, are those costs incurred for common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect costs may include costs for basic

operational functions, including lights, water, and insurance. If indirect costs are included, the negotiated rate must be requested, and the application must include a copy of the current, approved, negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government. Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees, however indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee.

Under 2 C.F.R. Part 200.414 Indirect (F&A) Costs, any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.403 Factors affecting allowability of costs. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.414(f), if an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, s/he may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. 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, Maryland 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

Applicants should include funding for project evaluation in their budgets. While the costs for project evaluation may vary considerably, 10 to 20 percent of the total budget is a reasonable estimate of costs associated with a comprehensive project evaluation.

If appropriate, include in the budget narrative a description of any in-kind resources or

equipment that will be provided to support this project.

See www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/application_templates.html for a budget narrative template and model and a budget table model.

There is no page limit for this element.

(i) Data Sharing Plan. Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements. Environmental data are defined as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data, such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata.

We anticipate that most proposed projects under this funding announcement will not involve the collection of environmental data. If no data will be collected/created as part of the project, then this element of the application should consist of a single statement (on a separate page, under the heading "Data Sharing Plan") indicating that no data will be collected/created as part of this project. If an applicant's project does involve the collection of environmental data, the PI should contact one of the Federal Program Officers to discuss the content and form of an appropriate data sharing plan. There is no page limit for this element.

(j) References Cited. If literature references are cited in the project narrative, then a References Cited section should be included. Each reference should include the names of all authors in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication, the article title, publication or publication title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. While there is no established page limit, this section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside the 15-page project description.

(k) Letters of Commitment. If substantive partnerships are described in the project description, letters of commitment should be provided. Letters of commitment are important for demonstrating the concrete involvement of project partners (including NOAA partners) and are reviewed as part of the application. Partner institutions that will be participating in program activities are strongly encouraged to submit letters of commitment indicating their interest in the topic and format of the proposed program, their willingness to participate, and how the program complements their strategic priorities. Letters of commitment from applicants and project partners that demonstrate a commitment on the part of their institutional leadership to implement and sustain the proposed activities should also be included.

(l) NEPA Questionnaire. The Office of Education has determined that applicants do not need to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire.

(m) Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:

(i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;

(ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (e.g. DUNS number) in its 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 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.

C. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for full applications is 11:59:59 pm EDT on April 13, 2015 (Note that

NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM EDT). Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered for funding. Full applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by an automated receipt of the date and time of submission. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, there will be two automated email receipts sent to the application submitter with the date and time of submission (the first email confirms receipt, the second email confirms that there are no errors with your application submission and that it has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If both email confirmation receipts are not provided within two (2) days of application submission, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk and oed.grants@noaa.gov. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required elements have been appropriately submitted before the deadline. Additional instructions for Grants.gov can be found at www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg/faq_page.html.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted to this funding opportunity are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

There are no funding restrictions.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov APPLY (<http://www.grants.gov>). Hard copy and/or email application submissions will not be accepted.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

(1) Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (25 points): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA's Federal, regional, or local activities. The application should describe how well the proposed project addresses NOAA's stated objectives and priorities. Reviewers will evaluate:

- Whether the project advances NOAA's mission or not;

- How well the project addresses the goal of this funding opportunity, which is, to strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness and an understanding of Earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location;

- The extent to which the project is likely to increase participants ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact; to understand the scientific process and uncertainty; to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space; and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically;

- The extent to which the project utilizes NOAA data, data access tools, and other NOAA assets to accomplish its goals and, where applicable, involves NOAA employees or affiliates to facilitate the use of those assets;

- The extent to which the project will involve groups traditionally under-represented in Earth system science and/or groups from under-served communities;

- The extent to which the project will infuse the Ocean Literacy, Great Lakes Literacy, Climate Literacy, Atmospheric Science Literacy Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts, and/or Estuary Principles & Concepts, if applicable;

- Whether the project is aligned with existing community resilience plans, or other similar, for the areas that would be served by the proposed project, if applicable; and

- If environmental data will be collected as part of the project activities, has a Data/Information Sharing Plan been included that meets the requirements described in this FFO.

(2) Technical/scientific merit (35 points): This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are

clear project goals and objectives. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The completeness and adequacy of detail in the project description;
- The extent to which the project is based on a needs assessment and has clearly stated outcomes and objectives that are measurable, and will be measured, and appropriate to the target audience(s);
- The overall technical feasibility of the project, including whether the proposed approach is educationally and technically sound, is based on best practices , and (if applicable) is informed by previously funded NOAA's Environmental Literacy Grants;
- The extent to which the project incorporates the latest scientific research about the threats and vulnerabilities facing communities and considers socio-economic and ecological factors;
- The extent to which the project actively engages the participants in learning, and addresses real-world issues;
- The extent to which the project leverages existing networks of institutions to achieve the goals of the project.
- Whether there is a clear delineation of responsibilities of the project's key personnel and whether there are adequate communication mechanisms in place for coordinating among all project partners;
- Whether there are appropriate mechanisms to evaluate the success of the project in meeting the anticipated outcomes, including impacts on the target audience(s);
- If the project is very small in scale, if it will it be evaluated for applicability of implementation at other scales or in other places of similar scale.

(3) Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15 points): This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The relevance of the qualifications of the PIs, co-PIs, and key personnel;
- The PI's, co-PIs and key personnel's previous experience in managing, designing, and implementing the proposed activities;

-The evaluators' previous experience in managing, designing and implementing evaluations appropriate for the target audiences and proposed activities;

-The likelihood that the applicants and project partners have the appropriate resources to carry out the proposed activities and have the ability to complete the proposed project successfully;

(4) Project Costs (15 points): The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Reviewers will evaluate:

-The adequacy of the proposed resources to accomplish the proposed work within the indicated time-frame;

-Whether the budget is sufficient for the scope of the evaluation planned;

- The adequacy of detail in the budget table and narrative to allow an informed determination of how well all costs associated with the project are justified; and

(5) Outreach and Education (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Reviewers will evaluate:

-How the outcomes and results of the proposed project will be disseminated to audiences beyond those participating directly in the project;

-The likelihood that the project will increase awareness and use of NOAA resources among target audiences.

B. Review and Selection Process

Upon receipt of a completed application by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Minimum requirements, among other elements, include all of the following:

- All applicants are eligible to apply;
- Applications were received on time;
- All required elements of the applications are present and follow format requirements;
- The sum of the requested budgets of all applicants is no more than \$500,000 and no less than \$250,000 for all years of the project (not including any costs associated with NOAA partners, if applicable), and
- Project duration is 2 to 5 years.

Applications that do not meet all of these minimum requirements are neither reviewed nor considered for funding.

All applications that meet the eligibility and minimum requirements will be evaluated and scored by a panel of independent reviewers. Reviewers may be Federal or non-Federal experts, each having expertise in a separate area so that the reviewers as a whole cover the spectrum of applications received. The reviewers will score each application using the evaluation criteria and relative weights provided above. A rank order of all applications will be established by averaging the individual review ratings for each application. The review panel will not provide a consensus opinion. The Federal Program Officers (FPOs) will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review process. The FPOs will make their recommendations for funding based on rank order and the selection factors listed in the next section to the Selecting Official, the Director of NOAA Education, who is responsible for making final recommendations to the NOAA Grants Officer.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will select applications in the rank order established by each panel unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds:

- a. Geographically
- b. By type of institutions
- c. By type of partners
- d. By subject areas
- e. By project types

3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies;

4. Program priorities and policy factors;

5. Applicant's prior award performance;

6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Selected applicants may be asked to modify objectives, project plans, timelines, and/or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Review of applications will occur from April-June, 2015. It is anticipated that recommendations for funding under this announcement will be made by September 30,

2015. Projects funded under this announcement will start no earlier than October 1, 2015.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification (either hard copy or electronically) from the Office of Education by September 30, 2015, that 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, authorized by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be made by e-mail from Grants Online to the Authorized Representative of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification (either hard copy or electronically) from the Office of Education by September 30, 2015, that their reviewed application was not recommended for funding (declined) or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements prescribed in Sections IV.B and IV.C.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of federal funding until an official notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Officer.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain special award conditions for activities outlined within the proposal. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award as applicable and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this

announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management Registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration) and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25 and 170 (20120), (see http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=61d8b7e1303dc7a8551766b44801c3cd&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfrv1_02.tpl#0).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The recipients must comply with Executive Order 12906 regarding any and all geospatial data collected or produced under cooperative agreements. This includes documenting all geospatial data in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Content Standard for digital geospatial data. The Program uses only the existing NOAA Federal financial assistance awards package requirements per 15 CFR parts 14 and 24.

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, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/nepapub/nepa_documents/RedDont/G-CEQ-GuidanceRegulations.pdf. 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.

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable.

Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements: Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014, effective December 26, 2014 (79 FR 78390). These are also available at <https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30297>. Awards made under this announcement are subject to the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/DOC_Standard_Terms_12_26_2014.pdf.

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS EFFECTIVE DATE: On December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (OMB Uniform Guidance), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A 110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. The OMB Uniform Guidance supersedes DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. In accordance with the Federal Register notice published on December 19, 2014 (79 FR 75871) and the regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, the DOC adopted the OMB Uniform Guidance, codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, effective December 26, 2014, which means that the guidance applies to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made on or after December 26, 2014. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Applicants should familiarize themselves with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which may be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-subtitleA-chapII-subchap-id302.pdf>. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar/>.

Limitation of Liability

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. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Executive Order 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review)

It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)

It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

C. Reporting

Progress reports should be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online

system and are due semi-annually on October 30th and April 30th for the preceding 6-month period (April 1st to September 30th and October 1st to March 30th) or portion thereof if the project start or end-date falls in the middle of one of these intervals. A final comprehensive report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award. Progress reports should detail the accomplishments, outputs and outcomes that have occurred during the reporting period, correspond with the goals and objectives identified in the project narrative and provide specific, project-related information. A suggested template for progress reports will be provided to grantees. Progress on each award is communicated to NOAA in the form of performance progress reports, the requirements of which are outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200.301.

Federal Cash Transaction reports, form SF-425, should be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online system and are due semi-annually on October 30th and April 30th for the preceding 6-month period (April 1st to September 30th and October 1st to March 30th) or portion thereof if the project start or end-date falls in the middle of one of these intervals. Financial reports are due for all award recipients no later than 30 days after each 6-month period. The Final Financial Status report, form SF-425, is a comprehensive financial report that is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award.

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 \$25,000.

Data Sharing Plan

Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information 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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

The Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552) (FOIA) and DOC's implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R. part 4 set forth the rules and procedures to make requested material, information, and records publicly available. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under FOIA, contents of applications submitted by applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information." Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System, and Central Contractor Registration

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), now a part of the System for Award Management (SAM) and is located at www.sam.gov, and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170 (2010). The guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 25 may be located at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl, and the guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 170 may be located at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

Restrictions Governing Making Grants to Corporations Convicted of Felony Criminal Violations and/or Unpaid Federal Tax Liabilities.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, execution by an applicant of the “Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law” will be required in a format requested by NOAA (see Appendix A) before any award will be made under this FFO. For these purposes, a corporation is defined as an entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or the various territories of the United States including American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Midway Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. (Note that this includes both for-profit and non-profit organizations.)

VII. Agency Contacts

You can contact the Federal Program Officers: Carrie McDougall, John McLaughlin, Stacey Rudolph, or Christopher Nelson at 202-482-0793 or oed.grants@noaa.gov. For further information about the NOAA Office of Education, please visit the office website at

<http://www.oesd.noaa.gov>.

VIII. Other Information

Two informational webinars with the program officers will occur on March 9, 2015 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EDT and March 10, 2015 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm EDT. By 12:00 PM EST on March 6, 2015, interested applicants should register by contacting oed.grants@noaa.gov and including in the Subject line of the email: "Register for ELG15 FFO Webinar" and providing the interested party's name, institution, telephone number, email address and preferred webinar date in the body of the email. You will receive an email response from oed.grants@noaa.gov with the log-in information and date for the webinar. Whenever possible, individuals from the same institution should try to join the webinar from the same computer/phone line.

Note: Links to related information for applying are available at <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=funding>.

Appendix A. Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, none of the appropriated funds made available by relevant appropriations Acts may be used to issue a financial assistance award to any corporation that:

(a) Was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless the 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

(b) Has 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 the 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.

For purposes of the below certification, a corporation is defined as an entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or the various territories of the United States including American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Midway Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. (Note that this includes both for-profit and non-profit organizations.)

The below certification is required for all new financial assistance awards, and for all amendments to existing financial assistance awards, that are made to corporations (as defined above) and that are funded with appropriated funds made available to the Department of Commerce pursuant to relevant appropriations Acts. This certification is further required to the extent that other appropriation Acts contain the same or substantively similar prohibitions against the issuance of financial assistance awards to certain corporations.

Instructions: All recipients that are corporations (as defined above) must complete paragraphs (1) and (2) below, which must be signed below by an authorized representative of the corporation. Recipients that are not corporations are not required to complete this representation.

(1) _____ [insert name of corporation] certifies that it is__ is not__ (check one) a corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the 24 months preceding the signature date of this Representation.

(2) _____ [insert name of corporation] certifies that it is__ is not__ check one) a corporation that has 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 agreements with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

By: _____

[Typed name and title of the signing individual]

[Typed phone number of the signing individual]

[Typed email address of the signing individual]

Date: _____