



Welcome!

CONGRATULATIONS on receiving your NOAA award!

The NOAA Marine Debris Program is excited to partner with you on your project to reduce the impacts of marine debris on our nation's marine and coastal resources. The following document highlights a few important first steps you need to take, and responsibilities you will have throughout the life of your award. As always, please feel free to get in touch with any questions or concerns.

Again, we look forward to implementing a successful project together!

-NOAA Marine Debris Program Staff

NOAA Staff Contact Information

NOAA Marine Debris Program staff members at NOAA's headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, as well as at regional offices across the country, are available to help you throughout the duration of your award. The Federal Program Officer for your award helps to process your grant from the program-side, manages National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, reviews progress reports, and serves as an information source on grant procedures. Technical Monitors provide technical expertise, local oversight, and assistance to support marine debris projects, but also review proposals and progress reports and conduct NEPA analysis. Our communications staff is available to help with planning events, drafting press releases, developing joint events, and other communications needs. NOAA Grants Management Division staff review and process the final approval of your grant award, review financial reports, and process changes to the award.

The type of financial assistance you are receiving is a cooperative agreement. This means that NOAA intends to have meaningful involvement in the activities under the award and should be kept in the loop on major project decisions.

Headquarters / Administrative Contact:

Tom Barry (Federal Program Officer);

tom.barry@noaa.gov; (301) 713-4282 x161

Getting Started.

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE please complete the following set-up tasks which you need to successfully manage your award.

▶ REGISTER WITH THE A.S.A.P. SYSTEM

The Automated Standard Application for Payments ([ASAP](#)) system is what enables you to draw down funds from the grant into your bank account. For new grantees with no previous ASAP registration, you begin this process by submitting an Organization Profile Change Request to NOAA in the GrantsOnline system. **This process should be initiated immediately after signing your award, as it may take a few weeks to complete.** Click [here](#) to see a step-by-step of the full process. For grantees that have had a NOAA award previously, or who have an active ASAP account from an award with another agency, please contact your Federal Program Officer for help in linking your account with your new NOAA award.

Date initiated: _____

▶ CREATE USER PROFILES IN GRANTS ONLINE

For **key** personnel that will be involved in the administration of your award, now is the best time to set them up in GrantsOnline with their roles. Once entered into the system, each user is automatically given the appropriate permissions that pertain to their role. At a minimum you should have an Authorized Representative and a Business Representative identified. These may be different people, or may be the same person, depending on the structure of your organization or grants administration procedures. The Authorized Representative will either assign roles, usernames and passwords to all users in the organization, or pick another person to perform that administrative role. Click [here](#) to see a step-by-step of the process. Click [here](#) for information on user role definitions.

Date complete: _____

▶ UNDERSTAND THE TERMS OF THE AWARD

The award's Terms and Conditions are both important and useful. They lay out your responsibilities as a federal grantee and the requirements in administering federal funds. They also provide useful information on processes related to reporting, award amendments and other grants administrative procedures. These can be found in the CD-450, which is accessible from the GrantsOnline grants file (under the 'Award File 0' sub-document).

GrantsOnline.

NOAA's GrantsOnline system is a web-based platform that both you and NOAA will use to manage your grant. You will not receive any paper documents from NOAA regarding your grant. The agreement itself is signed electronically by both your organization and NOAA through GrantsOnline, and can be found in the online grant file. Please note, the NOAA GrantsOnline system is separate from Grants.gov, the website that allows you to search and apply for federal grants. **You must use GrantsOnline for all grant actions (aka. "Award Action Requests") you wish to initiate.** These include accepting the award offer from NOAA, requesting amendments to the agreement (such as no-cost extension requests, requests to change the project scope or budget), assigning user roles for members of the organization, and submitting progress and financial reports.

NOAA staff uses GrantsOnline to review your progress reports and process Award Action Requests. NOAA's Grants Management Division also uses GrantsOnline to process award action requests and track the financial aspects of the award.

The [GrantsOnline Training website](#) has resources to help you learn how to navigate through and complete tasks using GrantsOnline. The [Quick Reference Guide](#), at the top of the training website, provides much of the information that you need to get started in GrantsOnline, and we suggest you refer to this first when you need to perform an action in GrantsOnline. There are also more detailed instruction manuals available on the training website however. And of course, if you have questions please feel free to contact your Federal Program Officer.

Web Address: <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>

If you forget your password or get locked out of the system, please contact the **GrantsOnline Helpdesk**. The Authorized Representative for an award must also request login and password information for other users within the organization from the Helpdesk. They can be reached at:

(301) 444-2112 or (877) 662-2478 toll free

GrantsOnline.Helpdesk@noaa.gov

Getting Paid.

The Department of Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments ([ASAP](#)) system is the way in which all NOAA funding recipients draw down award funds. **You must enroll in ASAP in order to access funding from this grant.**

The ASAP system allows you to have funding directly transferred from your organization's established ASAP account to your organization's bank account. Except for certain organizations, drawdowns from ASAP can be made on an **as-needed basis** for payment on project related expenses and require no advance approval from NOAA. Funds may be drawn down before a payment is to be made, but drawdowns from ASAP that are not paid out by your organization in a timely manner should be returned to the ASAP account. Information about this system can be accessed at the Department of Treasury website and the [ASAP website](#). To register for ASAP, follow the instructions found at the [NOAA ASAP Enrollment Guidance](#) page.

You should begin the ASAP registration process immediately following your official acceptance of the award. Once you complete the initial steps in GrantsOnline, NOAA will verify it and enter your organization's data into ASAP. After this, your organization's Point of Contact (that you designated in GrantsOnline) will receive a user name and password for ASAP via USPS mail, along with instructions on how to complete the enrollment process. If you do not receive this mailing within 2 weeks, contact the ASAP.gov Helpdesk (see below). Timely completion of the steps in this process is critical, as there are multiple steps that can take some time to complete.

Once you are set up in the system and ready to make a drawdown, click [here](#) for a step-by-step help document of that process.

Web Address: <http://www.asap.gov>

If you need help with enrollment, please contact the **ASAP Help Desk at 855-868-0151**.

Progress Reporting.

Progress reports detailing the funding being spent and the work being done through the award are due every six months, according to the schedule described in the award's Special Award Conditions. You have 30 days after the end of the six-month reporting period to submit (through GrantsOnline) **both** a Financial Report (SF-425) and a Performance Progress Report. A task for each report will automatically appear in your GrantsOnline inbox at the end of each 6 month reporting period. Note: Performance Progress Report and Financial Reporting periods may not be synced to each other. Therefore, due dates may be different for each type of report.

Performance Progress Reports. Performance Progress Reports must include the following general project information: grant number, recipient organization, project start and end dates, reporting period end date. Most importantly, they must include a performance narrative. Performance narratives should include a description and status (completed, not-completed, on-going) of the major award activities conducted to-date and how they have achieved the short and long-term goals of the project. Progress on project goals is a critical aspect of reporting, so the performance narratives should also have an explanation of any delays, missed targets, or other unforeseen circumstances impacting the project. Your Federal Program Officer will work with you to determine the appropriate parameters to be used as performance measures for the project. Generally, these will include the amount of debris removed (if applicable), the number of volunteers involved with the project and the number of work hours that the volunteers contributed, among others. A general breakdown of funding expenditures for the reporting period should also be provided. Other attachments (such as pictures, press coverage, etc...) should also be included. Click [here](#), or visit the [GrantsOnline Training Resources](#) page for step-by-step instructions on submitting a progress report.

Financial Reports. Financial reporting is also done through GrantsOnline, and is a separate process from the Performance Progress Reporting process. The SF-425 is the name of the Financial Report you will need to submit. Unlike performance progress reports, Financial Reports are always due each October 30 and April 30. Note: the SF-425 is not a separate report form, but rather is a web form built into the GrantsOnline system. As such, unlike the Performance Progress Report, no attachment of reporting documents is required for the Financial Report. Click [here](#) for a step-by-step of the Financial Reporting process.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282; codified at 31 U.S.C. 6101 note) (FFATA). This Act is meant to increase transparency to the public on how federal funding is being spent. **You (the prime recipient) are required to file a FFATA sub-award report only if you make a sub-award greater than or equal to \$25,000 to another entity for work on your project**, per 2 CFR part 170. These reports are filed at the Federal Accountability and Transparency Act Sub-award Reporting System (www.fdrs.gov). If you will be providing any sub-awards under your grant greater or

equal to \$25,000 per sub-award, you must register with FSRS and report on them. Reports for each sub-award are due by the end of the month following the month in which your organization awards any sub-grant. See Public Law 109-282, as amended by section 6202(a) of Public Law 110-252 (see 31 U.S.C. 6101 note). The DOC incorporates the award term required by Appendix A of 2 CFR part 170 into all financial assistance awards.

Comprehensive final reports (both Performance Progress Report and Financial Report) covering all activities and expended funds during the award period are required and must be submitted to NOAA within 90 days after the end date of this award.

There may also be separate requirements for project monitoring that require more in-depth or extensive reporting through separate monitoring forms or reports. Your Federal Program Officer or Technical Monitor will work with you to determine the frequency and intensity of monitoring requirements for your award.

Award Amendments.

Requests to change an aspect of your grant (such as how funding is allocated within the budget, no-cost extensions to the award expiration date, etc...) are known as Award Action Requests (AARs). AARs must be submitted via the Grants Online system. However, we suggest that you discuss the changes with your Federal Program Officer first, so that we can provide the appropriate guidance on the process. Directions on how to submit Award Action Requests are available on the [Grants Online Quick Reference Guide for Grantees](#), or from the [GrantsOnline Training page](#). Additional guidance on what information should be included in a No-Cost Extension Request is also available.

Regulatory Compliance

Before funds are released to awarded marine debris projects, NOAA staff must conduct an analysis of environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires that federal agencies consider the environmental impacts and reasonable alternatives for proposed actions of any projects which are financed, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by the agency. Our regional and headquarters staff may need to collect information from you and any other project implementers to conduct this analysis. **Depending on the complexity or nature of your project, this analysis may delay receipt of, or your ability to use, project funds.** We may need you or any subgrantee of yours to provide information on: the scale of the project; the impact of proposed actions (both beneficial and adverse); impacts to public health or safety; any controversies or risks associated with the project; potential loss to scientific, cultural, or historic resources; compliance with federal, state, and local laws; acquisition of state and local permits; potential spread of non-native species; impacts to threatened or endangered species; and other individual or cumulative impacts. Again, this process usually begins and ends before you have even been notified of your award. However, it may last until after your project start date, especially if there are activities whose impacts cannot be assessed until design or other preliminary or project planning activities are complete.

You and any sub-awardees need to ensure that you adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws. You must ensure that implementation of the project will meet all federal laws and regulations by obtaining any required federal consultations and permits prior to expending federal funds or awarding match for those activities requiring permits and consultations. This includes, but is not restricted to, consultations required under the Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat), National Historic Preservation Act, and Coastal Zone Management Act.

It is your responsibility to obtain any state and local permits if necessary. As a grantee, you should be aware of all conditions and restrictions required by your permits and consultations, and should immediately stop activities and contact your NOAA Technical Monitor if events occur that threaten to violate the conditions or restrictions required by their permits and consultations.

You must maintain project files for all marine debris removal or prevention activities taking place under this award. These files must contain, at a minimum, project work plans and copies of all required federal and state permits/consultations associated with project implementation. The permits should be available to provide to NOAA upon request.

Safety

Safety is a critical consideration for marine debris project implementation. You and your sub-awardees must have a written safety plan for management of employees, contractors, and volunteers working on the project(s) as applicable. You should ensure that a safety briefing is conducted for all project participants immediately prior to their involvement in hands-on field activities under this award, and require that any volunteers sign a liability release waiver. The safety plan should consider safety in and around project sites during and after project construction, and take into account potential safety concerns with regard to the current and future use of the sites.

If a proposal has any SCUBA, and/or other use of compressed gas as a breathing medium (e.g. surface supplied air), for diving activities, it is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that SCUBA divers are certified to a level commensurate with the type and conditions of the diving activity being undertaken. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that any SCUBA diving activities using Federal grant funds under this award meet, at a minimum, all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the type of SCUBA diving being undertaken.

Your organization must have the capacity (appropriate insurance, safety policies, etc...) to oversee all proposed diving activities. All diving activities must meet, or be specifically exempted from, [OSHA guidelines](#).

Assuming all other relevant safety conditions are satisfied, divers that are not advanced divers may perform simple activities, such as underwater surveys and removal of light objects. Advanced divers are divers with advanced diving training **for the proposed tasks** and compliance with OSHA guidelines. Activities that should only be performed by advanced divers include, but are not limited to:

- Moving or lifting heavy objects, or using hand tools, weighing more than 25 pounds underwater
- Performing tasks requiring substantial physical exertion
- Use of lift bags
- Underwater removal of potentially entangling debris, such as nets, crab pots or fishing line.

Snorkeling activities are similarly restricted, in that snorkelers should only complete simple activities such as surveys and removal of light objects.

Outreach

As a recipient of this NOAA grant, you must display, where appropriate and practical, publicly visible signs indicating that the project has received funding through the NOAA Marine Debris Program. These signs should also identify other contributing partners. These contributions should also be acknowledged in all communications with the media and the public and in all outreach related to the projects.

Products related to grant projects such as educational curriculum, any public reports, etc... may be made available for distribution to the public through the NOAA Marine Debris Program website. We may also ask to work with you, when necessary, on website content or other messaging that may be displayed on your or NOAA's website (www.marinedebris.noaa.gov) in order to facilitate public awareness about the project.

For more information about the NOAA Marine Debris Program

Website: <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>

Blog: <http://marinedebrisblog.wordpress.com/>

Clearinghouse: <http://clearinghouse.marinedebris.noaa.gov>

Questions?

Please feel free to contact your Federal Program Officer at any time with any questions or concerns.

Tom Barry (Federal Program Officer);

tom.barry@noaa.gov; (301) 713-4282 x161

Also, our website has a number of helpful resources that you may find of value in administering and implementing your NOAA award. The web address is:

<http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/about-our-program/applicant-resources>

Again, congratulations and we look forward to working with you!