

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Projects of Special Merit Competition - FY2014

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCRM-2014-2003918

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.419, Coastal Zone Management Administration Awards

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, January 7, 2014.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise eligible applicants that NOAA is soliciting proposals for competitive funding under the Coastal Zone Management Act's (CZMA) Enhancement Program Projects of Special Merit, authorized under Section 309 of the CZMA 16 U.S.C. 1456b . The objective of Section 309 assistance is to encourage each State or Territory with a federally-approved coastal management program (CMP) to continually improve its program in specified areas of national importance. The intent of Projects of Special Merit (PSM) funding is to offer CMPs the opportunity to develop innovative projects that further their approved enhancement area strategies and focus on the following national enhancement area priorities: Wetlands, Hazards, Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, and Ocean and Great Lakes Resources. Any CMP that has been approved by NOAA pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1455) and has an approved 2011-2015 Section 309 Assessment and Strategy that contains at least one strategy addressing one or more of the four priority enhancement areas is eligible to apply for this competition.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objective of Section 309 is to encourage States or Territories with federally-approved coastal management programs (CMPs) to continually improve their programs. The intent of Projects of Special Merit (PSM) funding is to offer CMPs the opportunity to develop innovative projects that further their approved enhancement area strategies and focus on national priorities. The Secretary is authorized to make grants to a CMP for the development and submission of Federally approved program changes that support attainment of one or more enhancement area objectives established at § 923.122.

PSM funds will be awarded to CMPs competitively. Proposed projects shall further the objectives of an approved enhancement area strategy but shall not be essential to meeting specific benchmarks in the strategy. PSM projects shall not be dependent on long term levels of funding to succeed.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must focus on one or more of the following priority enhancement area objectives:

- Wetlands: Protecting, restoring, or enhancing existing coastal wetlands, or creating new coastal wetlands.

- Hazards: Preventing or significantly reducing threats to life and property by eliminating development and redevelopment in high-hazard areas, managing development in other hazard areas, and anticipating and managing the effects of potential sea level rise and Great Lakes level change.

- Cumulative and Secondary Impacts: Developing and adopting procedures to assess, consider, and control cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, including the collective effect on various individual uses or activities on coastal resources, such as coastal wetlands and fishery resources.

- Ocean and Great Lakes Resources (including planning for offshore energy uses): Planning for the use of ocean resources.

Funds may be used for any of the following allowable uses which support the attainment of a program change:

- Project personnel costs;
- Supplies and overhead;
- Travel;
- Equipment (pursuant to 15 CFR part 24);
- Projects, studies and reports; and
- Contractual costs including subcontracts, sub-awards, personal service contracts with individuals, memoranda of agreement/understanding, and other forms of pass through funding for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of section 309.

Funds may not be used for land acquisition or construction projects.

C. Program Authority

Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1456b).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for PSM is \$1 million or 10% of Section 309 funds for FY 2014. Funding is subject to availability of FY 2014 appropriations. The allocation may vary depending on the total Section 309 funds available. It is estimated that approximately 5-15 proposals ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 will be selected. The maximum amount that may be requested for the federal share of a PSM is \$200,000. Funds not allocated for PSM awards will be returned to the weighted formula allocation under Section 309. Each applicant may submit no more than two applications for consideration under this competition.

B. Project/Award Period

The standard financial assistance award period is 18 months. It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have a grant start date of October 1, 2014.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Projects will be funded as cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the federal government during performance of the proposed activity. The recipient can expect substantial collaboration, participation, and/or intervention in the management of the project by NOAA. Some examples of substantial involvement by NOAA include the ability to halt an activity immediately if detailed performance specifications are not met; NOAA specifying direction or redirection of scope of work due to the interrelationships with other projects; NOAA collaborating with the recipient by working jointly with a recipient scientist or technician in carrying out the scope of work, by training recipient personnel, or detailing federal personnel to work on the project; and by NOAA limiting recipient discretion with respect to scope of work, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operations, and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Any State or Territorial coastal management program that has been approved by NOAA pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1455) is eligible under this announcement if the requirements established at § 923.121 are met. Applicants must have an approved Assessment and Strategy for the 2011-2015 assessment period which includes at least one strategy for one or more of the priority enhancement areas identified in Section I.B to be eligible for funding under this announcement. In addition to strategies that were originally approved as part of a state's Assessment and Strategy, approved strategies also include strategies that were added or substantially modified and approved by NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management prior to the start of the competition. Strategies added or substantially modified after the date on which this notice was published are not approved strategies for the purposes of this competition.

The designated lead agency for implementing each approved CMP is eligible to submit projects for funding under this competition. For the purposes of this competition, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission is an eligible applicant. Eligible applicants may submit a proposal on behalf of state agency partners within the approved state coastal management program network, if applicable. Local governments and nonprofits may participate as partners on the proposed projects; however, projects should be focused upon enhancing the approved state coastal management program.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No state match is required (CFR § 923.124 (a)(1)).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Funds may not be used for land acquisition or construction projects.

Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives and must be consistent with general cost principles for grants awarded by Federal agencies, as contained in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87: Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments. A copy of OMB Circular A-87 (and A-122, referenced later in this notice) can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_circulars.html.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The full funding opportunity announcement and application materials are available online at: <http://www.grants.gov>. Materials may also be requested by contacting the program official identified below. To request an application package or for further information, contact:

Elizabeth Mountz

Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

NOAA National Ocean Service

1305 East West Highway

Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-713-3155 ext. 148

Elizabeth.Mountz@noaa.gov

During the competition period, eligible applicants (state CMPs) should submit any questions regarding the competition via email to the competition manager listed above. Questions and answers will be compiled on a bi-weekly basis, at a minimum, and sent out to the CZM program managers' email list in order for all potential applicants to have access to the same level of information. All questions should be submitted to NOAA by December 2, 2013, in order to allow NOAA to respond in a timely manner for the information to be useful for all potential applicants developing proposals. NOAA will not answer any competition policy-related questions submitted after December 2, 2013. Competition policy-related

questions include inquiries on project eligibility, eligible costs, and project narrative requirements. However, during this period NOAA will continue to assist applicants with questions regarding the application submittal process, such as resolving issues related to grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications: Application proposals shall contain the following items, established at § 923.126(b):

(1) A clear and concise description of the project explaining the relationship of the project to the CMP's approved Assessment and Strategy and how it will support an approved enhancement area strategy;

(2) A specific timetable;

(3) A description of the activities that will be undertaken to complete the project and by whom;

(4) Identification of any sub-awardees, pursuant to §923.94(d)(3)(11);

(5) An estimate of total costs; and

(6) Documentation of fiscal needs and technical needs, if any:

- Fiscal needs: information on the current State budget (surplus or deficit), the budget of the applying agency (increase or decrease over previous fiscal year), future budget projections, and what efforts have been made by the applying agency, if any, to secure additional State funds from the Legislature and/or from off-budget sources such as user fees; and

- Technical needs: identification of the technical knowledge, skills and equipment that are needed to carry out proposed projects and that are not available to the applying agency, and what efforts the applying agency has made, if any, to obtain the trained personnel and equipment it needs (for example, through agreements with other State agencies).

The application should be no more than 10 pages, single-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font. A penalty of 5 points will be assigned to any applications that exceed this limit. See Section V. Application Review for information that should be incorporated. Appendices or supplemental information are excluded from the 10-page limit. The only

appendices or supplemental information that will be considered include letters of support from project partners, detailed descriptions of the qualifications of any known sub-awardee or contractor, maps, and the data/information sharing plan referenced in section VIII, if the application proposes to produce environmental data. The data/information sharing plan should be included as an appendix and does not need to be included within the project narrative.

Each application must include the following required elements:

1. Project Title
2. Project Overview

Applicant Contact Information:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Principle Project Manager:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Project Partners (if any):

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Geographic Area(s) Affected:

Total Cost: \$

Did you submit an additional PSM proposal for consideration? Yes No

3. Project of Special Merit Enhancement Areas

Identify the enhancement area under which you would like this proposal to be considered (list all that apply: Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, Wetlands, Coastal Hazards, and/or Ocean and Great Lake Resources).

4. Associated Program Change

a) Identify the approved strategy that the proposed Project of Special Merit will support (please use the exact title as approved in the Assessment and Strategy):

b) List the type(s) of program change that the supported strategy was approved to result in, or implement (list all that apply):

- A change to coastal zone boundaries; New or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;

- New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;

- New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;

- New or revised Special Area Management Plans (SAMP) or plans for Areas of Particular Concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,

- New or revised guidelines, procedures and policy documents which are formally adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CZM program policies to applicants, local government and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

5. Project Description

Provide a clear and concise description of the project that explains the relationship of the proposed project to the CMP's approved Assessment and Strategy and how the proposed project will further all or part of a program change that the CMP has identified in its Strategy. In addition, the project description should include:

- clear and specific project goals, measurable objectives, and outcomes;

- how the project addresses one or more PSM national priority enhancement area objectives in an innovative way;

- project activities that will be undertaken and by whom (including the identification of any sub-awardees);

- the likelihood for success of the project approach to achieve the identified goals, objectives, and outcomes; and

- project evaluation components and activities to communicate or disseminate project outcomes.

6. Benefits to Coastal Management

Describe the anticipated effect(s) and outcome(s) of the Project of Special Merit including

- a clear articulation of the scope and value in improved coastal management and resource protection;

- benefits to the public;

- timeframe in which project outcome(s) are expected to result in implementable management improvements; and

- transferability to other Coastal Management Programs.

7. Fiscal and Technical Needs and Past Performance

a) Fiscal and Technical Needs: Provide a brief description of the fiscal and technical needs of the State related to the proposed project

b) Past Performance under the Section 309 Program: Provide a brief description of the CMP's past performance and success in achieving the expected results of Section 309 strategies that are similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project.

8. Project Work Plan

Provide a work plan that includes the major tasks or actions necessary for achieving the goals and outcomes of the proposed project. Briefly describe the capacity of the program to carry out the project including collaboration with partners. The work plan should also identify milestones, outcomes, and a schedule for their completion.

Example Work Plan Format (please duplicate outline as needed for multiple tasks):

Title:

Timeframe:

Description of Activities and Program Capacity:

Milestone(s) and Date of Completion:

Outcome(s) and Date of Completion:

List of Final Products:

9. Project Budget

Budget narrative: The budget narrative shall be composed of two parts, a budget table and a budget description. The budget narrative shall include the total project costs that are required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description. The budget narrative shall provide the information needed to determine how the numbers outlined in the Budget Information form (SF-424A) were derived. The narrative should explain the specific budget categories that are outlined in the SF-424A form, such as personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs. The budget narrative submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on all required Federal forms (SF-424, SF-424A). Additional cost detail may be required prior to a final analysis of overall cost allowability, allocability, and reasonableness. The budget table should detail the federal Section 309 funds required for each task by budget category as described below:

Budget Category	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Total
Personnel				
Fringe				
Travel				
Subcontract				
Indirect				
Supplies				
Equipment				
Other				
Total				

Please Note the following:

-The budget narrative must itemize and describe the intended use of equipment greater than \$5,000 unit cost in value purchased under the award. (Applications selected for funding will be required to conduct a lease vs. purchase analysis for all equipment purchased under this award.)

-The budget may include an amount for indirect costs only if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. -Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. NOAA strongly encourages applicants to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure that your proposal is competitive.

- PSM funds may not be used to contract with NOAA for products or services. NOAA also cannot 'retain' PSM funds; all PSM funds must be awarded to the state.

The following Federal Application Forms are Required:

- a. Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424
- b. Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: SF-424A
- c. Assurances for Non-construction Programs: SF-424B
- d. Certification Regarding Lobbying: CD-511
- e. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, January 7, 2014.

Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications are subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPCO) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/.

E. Funding Restrictions

Awards will contain special award conditions that recipients must meet as a term of accepting the grant. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included under the award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation or other project costs if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of other agency priorities.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants without Internet access can submit paper applications by the closing date and time to the following address:

Elizabeth Mountz

Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

NOAA Ocean Service

1305 East West Highway

Silver Spring, MD 20910

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

a. Importance and relevance of proposed project to the objective of the competition (45 percent).

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, or State activities. Each application will be judged on the importance of the project to the management of coastal issues in the applicant's State or region and how the coastal management program will benefit from the project. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- Likelihood that the proposed project would help the state make substantial progress toward achieving the program change(s) of its approved Section 309 enhancement area strategy(ies) for one or more national priority enhancement area objectives (i.e., wetlands, hazards, cumulative and secondary impacts, and ocean and Great Lakes resources (including planning for offshore energy uses) as described in the project proposal. (15 points)

- Likelihood that the proposed project would result in improved management of ocean and coastal resources and uses and provide public benefit in one or more national priority enhancement area objectives. (15 points)

- Transferability of project results to solve coastal management issues in other states. (15 points)

b. Technical/scientific merit (30 percent).

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals, objectives, and outcomes. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- Extent to which the project proposal includes clear goals, objectives, outcomes and timetables. (10 points)

- Extent to which the proposed approach is technically sound (i.e., the proposed methods, approaches, and concepts are appropriate given the projects goals, objectives, and desired outcomes) and innovative (10 points)

- Degree to which the proposal identifies the state's technical needs and explains how the proposed project will help meet those needs. (5 points)

- Degree to which there is a meaningful evaluative component to the project to assess the overall success of the project and effectiveness of project outcomes. (5 points)

- c. Overall qualifications of applicants (10 percent).

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary program capacity to accomplish the project. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Overall qualification of the applicant and past performance. (5 points)

- Extent to which PSM funding provides essential technical support for the State's ability in the long-term to address an identified critical need or gap. (5 points)

d. Project costs (5 percent).

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- The reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and with the expected benefits to be achieved. (5 points)

e. Outreach and education (10 percent).

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective outreach and education strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

- The quality of proposed partnerships, including the degree of participation within the network of coastal states, organizations, Local, State, and Federal agencies, etc., and demonstration of partnering that results in training, outreach, and/or education. (5 points)

- Quality of proposed education and outreach activities to ensure public, other state coastal management programs, and relevant stakeholders are aware of and can benefit from project results. (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in three steps: 1) an initial screening by competition program staff within NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), Coastal Programs Division; 2) a merit review; and 3) final selection by the Selecting Official (i.e., Director of the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management or the Director's designee). The merit review step will involve at least three reviewers per application. The Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based on the numerical ranking of the applications, the evaluations by the merit reviewers, and the selection factors set in V.C., below.

1. Initial Screening. The initial screening will ensure that application packages have all required forms and application elements and meet all of the eligibility criteria. Applications that pass this initial screening will be submitted for merit review.

2. Merit Review. Eligible applications for PSM will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weights described in this solicitation by at least three independent peer reviewers through an independent peer mail review and/or an independent peer panel. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer reviewers through mail reviews or on the review panels. If a panel is convened, the panel will be comprised of subject matter experts and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference or electron electronic means. The merit reviewer's ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

3. Final Selection. The competition program staff will create a ranking of the proposals to be recommended for funding using the average merit review or panel review scores, if a panel review is conducted. The reviewer comments, composite project scores, rank order, and a summary of the concerns (if any) identified through the mail and/or panel review process along with information pertaining to selection factors (see below) will be presented to the Selecting Official.

Based on the numerical ranking, merit review written evaluations, and the additional selection factors described below, the Selecting Official will develop a list of projects recommended for funding. Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, and budgets, and to 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 mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The selecting official may choose to recommend a proposal out of rank order based upon:

- Availability of funding;
- Balance/distribution of funds;
- Geographic distribution of projects and/or funds;
- By type of partners
- By issue area
- By project type
- Program objective and priorities (see sections I.A. and I.B. of this announcement);
- Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies;
- The applicant's prior award performance; and/or

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

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The review of applications will begin in January 2014. All PSM awards will have an October 1, 2014, start date (regardless of the start date for a state's annual CZM award).

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by e-mail that their application was recommended for funding. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is NOT the official award notice. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer.

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 and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl.

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634) are applicable to this solicitation. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

Unpaid or delinquent tax liability.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

Standard Terms and Conditions.

Successful applicants that accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Office in the Grants Online award package may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements to fulfill, and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable, such as requirements for submitting progress reports.

2. Coastal Zone Enhancement Program Requirements

The project must meet the CZMA Section 309 Program Guidance FY 2011-2015 published in July 2009. The Guidance is located at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/backmatter/guidance.html>.

3. Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients are required to provide semi-annual financial and performance reports. Performance reports are required every six months from the time an award starts until it is closed. Performance reports are to be submitted to the NOAA program officer. The standard performance period is 18 months, but may be extended an additional 18 months if circumstances warrant. Within 30 days of the conclusion of each six-month period, recipients must submit a report summarizing activities conducted in support of the project during the prior six months. Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer. NOAA's Grants Management Division will also provide guidance for its semi-annual financial reporting requirements. Each grant recipient will need to demonstrate, through performance and financial reports, that all award conditions have been met before an award can be closed. Financial and performance reporting, as well as all other grant management activities after a grant is awarded, are conducted electronically through NOAA's grants management system, NOAA Grants On-line, at: <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/>.

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.

VII. Agency Contacts

Elizabeth Mountz

Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

NOAA Ocean Service

1305 East West Highway

Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-713-3155 ext. 148

Elizabeth.Mountz@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.419). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off-line, and then upload and submit the application via Grants.gov.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two e-mail messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first e-mail will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected due to errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another e-mail when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.

Official notification of an award notice is provided by the Grants Management Division, not the program office. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement from an authorized NOAA grant official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award.

NOAA will not release the names of applicants submitting proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out information about NOAA awards http://grants.gov/applicants/find_grant_opportunities.jsp or go through the Freedom of Information Act process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOI process is on-line at <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~foia/>.

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.

PIs must indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.

Information on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Policy is available under:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.pdf