

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2010 B-WET Chesapeake

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-NCBO-2010-2001766

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.457, Chesapeake Bay Studies

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5 p.m. EDT on October 16, 2009. 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. Proposals must be received by 5 p.m.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Chesapeake B-WET grant program is a competitively based program that supports existing environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new programs, and encourages the development of partnerships among environmental education programs throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. Funded projects assist in meeting the Stewardship and Community Engagement goals of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. Projects support organizations that provide students meaningful watershed educational experiences and teachers related professional development opportunities and resources related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET)

Program was established in 2002 to provide environment-based education to students, teachers, and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Using the environment as the context for learning has been shown to increase a student's academic achievement performance, enthusiasm and engagement for learning, and encourages greater pride and ownership in accomplishments. Outdoor experiences can provide a platform upon which educators create a curriculum that interests learners and revitalizes teachers.

The Chesapeake Bay B-WET grant program is a competitively based program that supports existing environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new programs, and encourages the development of partnerships among environmental education programs throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. Funded projects assist in meeting the Stewardship and Community Engagement goals of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. Projects support organizations that provide student "meaningful" Chesapeake Bay or stream outdoor experiences and teacher professional development opportunities and resources in the area of environmental education. The B-WET Program provides an opportunity to foster a population that is knowledgeable about the Chesapeake Bay watershed environment. Environmentally literate individuals can become effective future workers, problem solvers, and thoughtful community leaders and participants.

#### B. Program Priorities

Proposals should address one of the following areas of interest, support the NOAA Education Plan ([http:// www.oesd.noaa.gov/NOAA\\_Ed\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/NOAA_Ed_Plan.pdf)), include NOAA products, services, or staff in delivery of programming, and follow the guiding

principles of a meaningful watershed educational experience as defined by the Chesapeake Bay Program ([http://www.chesapeakebay.net/pubs/doc-c2k\\_meaningful\\_bay\\_experience.pdf](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/pubs/doc-c2k_meaningful_bay_experience.pdf)).

### 1. Exemplary Programs combining Teacher Professional Development with classroom-integrated MWEEs

The NCBO seeks proposals for exemplar projects that combine Teacher Professional Development with long-term K-12 classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for their Students. Long-term professional development for teachers coupled with multiple meaningful watershed experiences for students that are fully supported in the classroom by their teachers will ensure that the concepts of watershed education are reinforced throughout the school year. As the purveyors of education, teachers can ultimately make meaningful environmental education experiences for students by weaving together classroom and field activities within the context of their curriculum and of current critical issues that impact the watershed. The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries should be considered a living resource that provides a genuine, locally relevant source of environmental knowledge that can be used to help advance student learning skills and problem-solving abilities across the entire school curriculum.

### 2. MWEEs using the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System (CBIBS)

The NCBO seeks proposals that incorporate NOAA CBIBS ( into K-12 meaningful watershed educational experiences for students and/or related professional development for teachers. CBIBS is a system of buoys that transmits real-time oceanographic, meteorological, and water-quality data and marks and interprets key points along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (CAJO)\_the Nation\_s first water-based National Historic Trail. Successful applicants will be required to utilize a new online student data sharing website developed by National Geographic called FieldScope that will allow for graphing and data manipulation similar to that represented on the CBIBS website. Therefore, funding for web-based data capabilities will not be supported unless strongly justified.

### 3. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) for students or Professional Development (PD) for Teachers

The NCBO will continue to provide funding for high-quality projects that provide

opportunities for K-12 students to participate in meaningful watershed educational experiences or that provide K-12 teachers within the Chesapeake Bay watershed opportunities for professional development when the applicant can demonstrate that it is not possible or in the project's best interest to meet the criteria of an exemplary program. The Chesapeake Bay, with its tributaries, provides an excellent opportunity for environmental education.

For many MWEE applicants, the Bay's tidal and non-tidal waters and the

surrounding landscape provide "hands-on" laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the greater environment. For other applicants, the Bay watershed can be brought alive to the classroom through a strong complement of outdoor and classroom experiences. PD applicants should offer multi-day professional development opportunities with year-long support will reinforce a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship

of our natural resources.

#### 4. Capacity Building

Fostering stewardship in the larger education community can take on many forms, including website development, evaluation assistance, networking and/or other necessary products and services. Applicants may also identify a larger, systematic need in their education community that would address MWEE goals, such as teacher conferences focused on MWEEs or resource handbooks for educators. Applicants in this category should demonstrate a need for their request and tie it directly to MWEEs. The NCBO seeks proposals that explore innovative methods for reaching students and teachers in promoting awareness and respect for the Bay watershed. Successful applicants will ensure their products and services will serve multiple audiences; and demonstrate long-term integration into the classroom.

In addition to the four program priorities above, two additional factors will be taken

into consideration in making funding recommendations: (5) continuing existing projects and (6) whether the applicant is a smaller, community-based organization.

#### 5. Continuing Projects

The NCBO has existing grants that were identified as multi-year projects in previous application processes. Renewal grants will be awarded to continue these multi-year projects under this announcement pending successful review of a new work plan by the Federal Program Officer, and adequate progress reports and/or site visits. These projects will not undergo competitive review through this application process. Therefore, funding for new proposals may be limited due to funding of renewal projects.

#### 6. Smaller, Community-Based Organizations

Approximately 10% of the total amount available will be awarded to smaller, community-based organizations that work at a local level to provide environmental education programs.

#### C. Program Authority

##### C. Program Authority

Under 33 USC 893a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

#### D. Cost Principles

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations"; A-21, "Cost Principles for Education Institutions"; and A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments." Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable."

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that approximately \$3.5M may be available in FY 2010 in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds. Funding is anticipated to maintain partnerships for up to 3 years duration, but is dependent on funding made available annually by Congress. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program.

1. About \$2.5M will be for exemplary programs that successfully integrate teacher professional development on the Chesapeake Bay watershed with in-depth classroom study and outdoor experiences for their students.

2. About \$500K will be for proposals that incorporate CBIBS into meaningful watershed educational experiences for students or related professional development for teachers.

3. About \$250K will be for proposals that provide opportunities either for students to participate in MWEEs related to Chesapeake Bay or related Professional Development for teachers.

4. About \$250K will be for capacity building proposals that address larger, systematic needs and/or provide resources to the educational community related to MWEES.

The NCBO anticipates that typical awards for B-WET Exemplary Programs that successfully integrate teacher professional development with in-depth classroom student and outdoor experiences for their students will range from \$50,000 to

\$200,000. Projects focusing on the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy system will range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Projects that represent either meaningful watershed educational experiences for students or teacher professional development in watershed education will range from \$25,000 to \$75,000. Projects addressing the capacity building needs of organizations will range from \$15,000 to \$75,000.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the

government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

#### B. Project/Award Period

Proposals may be considered eligible for continuation beyond the first project period. For projects that anticipate multiple years of funding, proposals should be submitted for a minimum of two years and may be submitted for up to three years.

However, if not initially awarded as a multi-year grant, funds will be made available for only a 12-month award period and any continuation of the award period will

depend on submission of a successful proposal subject to technical and panel reviews, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding to continue the award. No assurance for a funding continuation exists; funding will be at the complete discretion of NOAA.

Projects that request multi-year funding must include in their submission a full description of the activities and budget for the first year as described in this announcement, as well as a summary description of the proposed work and estimated budget by line item (e.g. personnel, equipment, supplies) for each subsequent year.

Applications for partnerships should cover a project period between 1 and 3 years.

Multi year project period requests may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but once awarded, multi year partnerships will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. If an application is selected and approved for funding under a partnership, NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with this partnership in subsequent years. A recommendation to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) to continue an award for a partnership in subsequent

years, or to extend the period of performance, is at the total discretion of the selecting official based on recommendations by the Federal Program Officer.

Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the competitive process for developing multi year, watershed education partnerships are anticipated, but will be dependent on Chesapeake B-WET funding levels and on the performance of existing partners to successfully conduct partnership activities.

#### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Whether the funding instrument is a grant or a cooperative agreement will be determined by the amount of NCBO's involvement in the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if NCBO shares responsibility for management, control, direction, or performance of the project with the recipient. Specific terms regarding substantial involvement will be contained in special award conditions.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-through-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, community-based and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. The NCBO encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program, however, the NCBO strongly encourages applicants applying for either area of interest to share as much of the costs of the award as possible. Funds from other Federal awards may not be considered matching funds. The nature of the contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the review process. Priority selection will be given to proposals that propose cash rather than in-kind contributions.

#### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

### IV. Application and Submission Information

#### A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages can be obtained by contacting the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office B-WET Program staff. Potential applicants are also invited to contact the staff before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of partnership ideas to B-WET goals and objectives. Contacts are as follows:

Virginia/West Virginia: Ann Marie Chapman ([annmarie.chapman@noaa.gov](mailto:annmarie.chapman@noaa.gov))

Maryland's Eastern Shore/Delaware: Doug Levin ([doug.levin@noaa.gov](mailto:doug.levin@noaa.gov))

Maryland/Washington, D.C.: Kevin Schabow (kevin.schabow@noaa.gov)

Pennsylvania/Other: Shannon Sprague (shannon.sprague@noaa.gov)

Information on the Chesapeake B-WET program, including examples of watershed education partnerships that have been funded to date, can be found on the world wide web at <http://noaa.chesapeakebay.net/educationgrants.aspx>.

#### B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must be complete and must follow the format described in this notice. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NCBO or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>. If applying by paper application, applicants are required to submit one copy of the full proposal with original signatures on all required forms.

The following Federal Forms should be included with submission:

" Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424

" Budget Information, Nonconstruction Programs: SF-424A

" Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B

" Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility

Matters: Drug Free Workplace Environment: CD-511

Additionally, the following Department of Commerce forms will be required if proposal is selected for funding (if applicable):

" Applicant for Federal Assistance: CD-346 (Required for the following individuals- Sole Proprietorship, Partnerships, Corporations, Joint Venture, Non-profit Organizations)

" Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL

In addition to the Federal Forms outlined above, proposals must include the following information and it is strongly recommended that they follow the format outlined below. Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Proposals must be in at least 10-point font, 1" margins, and not exceed 12 pages in length (excluding federal forms and appendices). Additional informational material will be discarded prior to review.

(1) Project summary (1 page):

" Organization title.

" Principal Investigator(s) (PI).

" Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).

" Area of interest for which you are applying (i.e., Exemplary, CBIBS, MWEE/PD, or Capacity Building).

" Project title.

" Project duration (12 to 36 month project period starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month). Specify whether the project is being submitted with the intention of continuation beyond the first year.

" Short summary of project (2-4 sentences to be used in outreach materials)

" Primary objectives for this fiscal year, including (1) number of teachers and/or students to be reached by project this year and over life of project & (2) cost per student and/or teacher.

" Budget Information:

-

Total Federal funding requested this fiscal year.

-

Total Non-Federal match for this fiscal year. Specify whether contributions are project-related cash or in-kind.

-

Total multi-year request and match (if applicable)

-

If a MD applicant, specify if the project has requested funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Environmental Education Grants Program; and if so, how much funding has been requested.

(2) Project description: Describe in detail what your project will achieve.

Specifically, describe how your project addresses each of the Evaluation Criteria defined in Section V.A.

" Explain the purpose of your project, identify the target audience, and give a precise

location of the project and area(s) to be served. Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience, including anything that makes your target audience unique and alignment with state standards. Be sure to include how many students and/or teachers are involved in your project.

" Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance

" Include information on how the project is using NOAA products, services, or staffing in its delivery.

(3) Organization and Personnel: Proposals should demonstrate knowledge and experience in delivering the type of project requested in this application or otherwise

explain why this organization can reasonably be expected to succeed in the delivery of this project. Include resumes for each key contributor in appendices.

(4) Budget Justification/Total project costs: Provide a detailed spreadsheet with narrative to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs). Applicants are encouraged to use the B-WET budget justification form found at <http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/FormalEducation.aspx>. The budget justification (narrative and spreadsheet) submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on required SF-424 and SF-424A forms. For Maryland applicants: Specify how much funding has been requested from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Environmental Education Grants Program to support the project, if such funding has been requested.

For multi-year projects: Ensure that there is a detailed budget narrative detailing the budget requested for each year matching each SF-424A form.

(5) Outreach and Education: Projects should include significant external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages students and/or teachers to share their experiences with peers and with the environmental education community, e.g., through mentoring opportunities, presentations at conferences, in-school service days, or other public forums, and media.

(6) Need for government financial assistance: Explain why other funding sources cannot fund all of the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.

(7) Project Evaluation: Evaluation here is defined as the systematic collection and documentation of information about your project's outcomes in order to improve the

project's effectiveness, guide judgments about its impact, and/or inform decisions about future programming or funding. No more than 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal. For detailed information on how to create an evaluation plan, please use the CA B-WET website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html>. In addition, grantees will be required to participate in a programmatic B-WET evaluation as a condition of funding

APPENDICES (not included in 12 page limit):

Results from prior NOAA support: If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received support from NOAA in the past 5 years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided:

- " The NOAA award number, amount and period of support;
- " The title of the project;
- " Summary of the results of the completed work (including # of teachers/students);
- " If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

Additional appendices may be included as follows: example curriculum and lesson plans (5 pages), resumes, letters of endorsement (encouraged from users and other non-partner entities), and/or letters of support (required from partner organizations).

### 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 5p.m. EDT, October 16, 2009. 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

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

#### E. Funding Restrictions

##### 1. Indirect Cost Rates

Regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which the Department of Commerce will reimburse the recipient shall be the lesser of the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award, or the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by an oversight or cognizant Federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date.

However, the Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs for this Program. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount above the 25 percent level as cost sharing. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

##### 2. Allowable Costs

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur

in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations"; A-21, "Cost Principles for Education Institutions"; and A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments." Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable."

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery. Proposals being submitted hard copy must be received by: NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office; Education Coordinator; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A; Annapolis, Maryland 21403. Facsimile transmissions and e-mail submission of proposals will not be accepted.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education & Training Program (B-WET) at <http://www.grants.gov>. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an

application electronically through the site as well as the hours of operation. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

" To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a DUNS number and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). You should allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

" After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number.

" NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date.

Electronic application packages are strongly encouraged and are available at:

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

Paper applications may be mailed to:

Shannon Sprague, B-WET Program Manager

NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office

410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A

Annapolis, MD 21403

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NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office

410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A

Annapolis, MD 21403

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (25 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or

relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the B-WET Program this includes the following questions: Does the project provide an intentional connection to the watershed that will increase student and/or teacher awareness of their relationship to the stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay watershed? What is the likelihood of the proposed environmental activities to improve the general understanding of the environment? Is the project fully integrated into the

classroom (e.g. Does this project provide a meaningful way for teachers to meet state standards of learning in science and other disciplines) or teach methods to integrate the meaningful bay experience into the classroom in an integrated manner? Is the project part of the division curriculum or are the applicants attempting to create division curriculum in cooperation with the schools to fill a recognized gap? Does the project support NOAA's educational objectives?

## 2. Technical merit (40 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the B-WET Program this includes the following questions: Is the

project hands-on for the students and/or teachers? Is the project part of a sustained activity (e.g. preparation, outdoor action, and reflection for students or meaningful, sustained professional development activities for teachers)? Is the project design investigative (use equipment, take measurements, and make observations to reach conclusions) or project oriented (restoration, monitoring, protection)? Does the applicant utilize NOAA staff, products, or services in the delivery of this project? Are the objectives defined in the proposal focused on the stated outcome(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives can be reached within the proposed project period? For Exemplary programs only: Does the project meaningfully combine Teacher Professional Development with long-term classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for their Students? For student programs only: Is the project meaningfully aligned with academic learning standards in science and other disciplines (examples should be given of meaningful alignment with standards (not just listed out))? For teacher professional development programs only: Does the teacher receive the needed support to fully participate in the program (i.e., continuing education credit, substitute teachers, stipends, etc.)? Is this support reasonable and necessary? For the CBIBS programs only: does the project utilize

field experiences, real-time NOAA data and web interaction to enhance MWEEs for students and/or teacher professional development? Is the project meaningfully aligned with academic learning standards in science and other disciplines? For capacity building projects only: will the products and/or activities requested support the goals and objectives of the meaningful watershed educational experience as outlined above?

### 3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

For the B-WET Program this includes the following questions: Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the target audience? Does the applicant document past collaborations with schools or school systems? Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Does the proposal include partnerships (not just sub-contracting or financing of project)? Are the partnerships working relationships with all entities meaningfully contributing to the project? Are there letters of support from all partners necessary to carry out the project? Does the applicant partner with a school division or school system, individual schools, or teachers? Are there letters from the participating school divisions or school systems, individual schools, or teachers?

### 4. Project costs (20 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the B-WET Program this includes the following questions: Is the budget request reasonable for the number of students and/or teachers being reached? Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students and/or teachers in contact with the environment? Does

the applicant demonstrate the ability to leverage other resources? Is the nature of the cost share cash or in-kind; if it is in-kind are all contributions reflected accurately? Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in the implementation of the proposed project? Does the budget adequately detail the amount of time each individual will spend on the project; is this a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project? Review Panel Only: Is the proposed budget suitable to the geographic area?

## 5. Outreach (5 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective external communication and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the B-WET Program this includes the following question: Does the project involve significant external sharing and communication, including conferences, community events, in-service days, media, etc.? Note: Participation in the B-WET National conference should not be the sole justification to meet the outreach and education criteria.

## B. Review and Selection Process

### 1. Initial Evaluation of the Applications

Once a full application has been received by NCBO, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

### 2. Technical Review

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will undergo a technical review by a minimum of three independent reviewers. Each reviewer will individually evaluate and score proposals (1-100 points) using the evaluation criteria provided in Section 5A. This review will generally involve individuals in the field of environmental education from both NOAA and non-NOAA organizations throughout

the United States. The technical reviewers' ratings will be provided to the review panel. No consensus advice will be given by the technical reviewers.

### 3. Review Panel

Up to four separate review panels may be held depending on number of applications received. Reviewers serving on each panel may be Federal or non-Federal experts, each having expertise in areas relevant to the priority under consideration. The review panel may include reviewers who also served as technical reviewers. The reviewers will score each proposal assigned to them using the evaluation criteria and relative weights provided above. The reviewers may take into account the following: (a) panels discussions, (b) diversity of geographic location, (c) diversity of applicants, and (d) suitability of proposed budget to geographic area. The individual reviewers' ratings will be averaged for each application to establish rank order for that priority. No consensus advice will be given by the review panels. Scores from separate priority areas will not be combined to establish an overall rank order among priorities 1-4.

The Program Officer will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review panels. The Program Officer will make his/her recommendations for funding based on rank order of each panel and the selection factors listed below to the Selecting Official for final funding decisions.

### C. Selection Factors

The Chesapeake Bay B-WET Program Manager may, in consultation with NCBO staff, review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel and make recommendations to the Selecting Official. The average rank order from the review panel will be the primary consideration for the Selection Official in deciding which of the new proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the technical reviews, recommendations of the review panel, and

recommendations of the Chesapeake Bay B-WET Program Manager. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the following factors:

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

" Geographically

" By type of institutions

" By type of partners

" By research areas

" By project types

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies

4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in section I.A. and I.B.

5. Applicant's prior award performance

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups

Projects considered for continuation will be evaluated by the Director of the NCBO, in consultation with the Chesapeake Bay B-WET Program Manager and other NCBO staff, to determine whether to be continued for funding based upon the advice of the review panel. If there has been satisfactory prior award performance, projects considered for continuation may take priority over new proposals.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the

three months following the date given in this announcement that the full proposals are due to NCBO and preliminary notification will occur in February 2010. No date prior to July 1, 2010 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise authorized by the Program Officer (see agency contact in Section VII) or to ensure no funding gap for those applicants requesting continuation of grants.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification 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, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be issued through postal mail to the Authorizing Official of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation and the applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of 12 months, then destroyed.

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW:** Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

**LIMITATION OF LIABILITY:** In no event will NOAA or the Department of

Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6\\_TOC.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf) , and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an

application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

THE 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 February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696), are applicable to this solicitation.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT: This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). 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 the respective control numbers 0348\_0043, 0348\_0044, 0348\_0040, 0348\_0046, and 0605\_0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to, nor shall a 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: This notice has been determined to be 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT/REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT:

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 comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements for the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer (NOAA Grants Management Division). Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer (Chesapeake Bay B-WET Coordinator or their designate). Electronic submission of performance reports is preferred. All reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each

6-month period from the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration.

## VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the B-WET website for further information at:

<http://noaa.chesapeakebay.net/educationgrants.aspx> or contact the NOAA

Chesapeake Bay Office; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A, Annapolis, MD 21403, or

by phone at 410-267-5660. B-WET contacts are as follows:

Virginia/West Virginia: Ann Marie Chapman ([annmarie.chapman@noaa.gov](mailto:annmarie.chapman@noaa.gov))

Maryland's Eastern Shore/Delaware: Doug Levin ([doug.levin@noaa.gov](mailto:doug.levin@noaa.gov))

Maryland/Washington, D.C.: Kevin Schabow ([kevin.schabow@noaa.gov](mailto:kevin.schabow@noaa.gov))

Pennsylvania/Other: Shannon Sprague ([shannon.sprague@noaa.gov](mailto:shannon.sprague@noaa.gov))

## VIII. Other Information