

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: 2014 NOAA California Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NMS-2014-2003868

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates: Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard time on January 16, 2014.

Funding Opportunity Description: The California B-WET Program is a competitive grant program that supports existing, high quality environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new, innovative programs, and encourages capacity building and partnership development for environmental education programs throughout the entire the San Francisco Bay, Monterey Bay, and Santa Barbara Channel watersheds. Successful projects provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for students and related professional development for teachers.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. B-WET was established in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and currently exists in seven regions: Chesapeake Bay, California, Hawaii, Gulf of Mexico, New England, Pacific Northwest, and Great Lakes. For more information, visit our National B-WET Program website at: <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet.html>.

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards and nurturing a sense of community, will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET Program, have been shown to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), thus contributing to NOAA's obligations under the America COMPETES Act (33 USC 893a(a)).

The California B-WET Program is a competitive grant program that supports existing, high quality environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new, innovative programs, and encourages capacity building and partnership development for environmental education programs throughout the entire the San Francisco Bay, Monterey Bay, and Santa Barbara Channel watersheds.

The terms used throughout each Section are defined as follows: a. Monterey Bay watershed- the counties of San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Monterey, San Benito, and San Luis Obispo; b. San Francisco Bay watershed- the counties of Marin, San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, and Sonoma; c. Santa Barbara Channel watershed- the counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura; d. Teachers- formal (school-based) and non-formal (not school-based) educators for kindergarten through high school; e. Students- kindergarten through high school.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must address one the following areas of interest: (1) Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students; (2) Professional Development in the Area of Environmental Education for Teachers; (3) After School, Science Camps and Summer Programs and (4) New Applicants and Projects. If proposals do not

address one of the areas of interest, they will be returned without further review

1. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries seeks proposals for projects that provide opportunities for students to participate in a meaningful watershed educational experience (MWEE). The marine environment and the surrounding watershed provide an excellent opportunity for environmental education. In many cases, tidal and non-tidal waters and the landscape around them can provide "hands-on" laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about the environment. In other cases, the environment can be brought alive to the classroom through a strong complement of outdoor and classroom experiences. The environment can provide a genuine, locally relevant source of knowledge that can be used to help advance student learning skills and problem-solving abilities across the entire school curriculum.

Proposals submitted under this area should address the following elements and types of activities:

a. Direct connection to the marine or estuarine environment and one or more of the National Marine Sanctuaries:

- Experiences demonstrate to students that local actions can impact the greater marine environment.

b. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) are an integral part of the instructional program:

- Experiences should be clearly part of what is occurring in the classroom.
- Experiences should be part of the curriculum and be aligned with the Content Standards for California Public Schools and the Education and the Environment Initiative.

c. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) are project-oriented, hands-on, and investigative:

- Experiences should be centered on questions, problems, and issues pertaining to their local watershed or coastal area;
- Experiences should be investigated through data collection, observation, and hands-on activities;
- Experiences should be centered on emerging marine issues, such as climate change, ocean acidification, and marine debris or other marine issues that threaten our coastal resources.

d. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) are part of a sustained activity:

- Experiences should be part of a sustained activity, preferably over the course of a school year, which stimulates and motivates the student from beginning to end.
- Experiences should consist of at least three outdoor experiences.
- Experiences should consist of three general parts - a preparation phase; an outdoor phase; and an analysis, reporting phase.

e. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) reflect an integrated approach to learning:

- Experiences should involve the use of materials, resources, and instruments to address multiple topics, such as civics, history, economics, math, English, art, and the cultural significance of our natural resources.

f. Projects involve external sharing and communication: Projects must promote sharing and emphasize the need for external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages the students to share their experiences with other students, family members or with the community, e.g., through a mentoring program, newsletters, journals, community presentations, or family audits.

g. Projects demonstrate partnerships: Project proposals should include multiple partners. A partnership is a collaborative working relationship between two or more organizations. All partners should be actively involved in the project, not just supply equipment or curricula. Letters from each partner must be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement. The California B-WET Program strongly encourages applicants to partner with a school or school system and demonstrate full support by the school administration.

h. Experiences are for all students: The California B-WET Program is strongly committed to expanding the knowledge and participation of a low income and underserved student population in marine and environmental education. At least 60% of the target audience served by this project will be from a low income or underserved student population. Please include the ethnic, social and gender demographics of the classroom participants, for example (46% Latinos, 80% free lunch, 15% females) and the webpage(s) that was used to gather the demographic information.

i. Projects utilize NOAA products, services or personnel: Experiences that are enhanced by NOAA products, services, or personnel. NOAA has a wealth of applicable products and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can heighten the impact of outdoor experiences. For example, NOAA data can be used to supplement or contextualize the information collected by students. Additionally, NOAA professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and as natural resources stewards, thus promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers.

2. Professional Development in the Area of Environmental Education for Teachers

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries seeks proposals for projects that provide teachers (in-service or pre-service) opportunities for professional development in the area of environmental education related to the San Francisco Bay watersheds, Monterey Bay watersheds, and Santa Barbara Channel watersheds. 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. Systematic, long-term professional development opportunities will reinforce a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources.

Proposals submitted under this area should address the following elements and types of activities:

a. Projects should provide teachers the understanding and essence of a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE):

- Professional development opportunities should instruct teachers about the meaning of a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience. Please include number of contact hours before, during and after the workshop.
- Projects should be designed so that teachers are capable of conducting an experience in their classroom. The goal is to ensure that professional development experiences for the teacher ultimately benefit the student. In person follow up is recommended to ensure that the teacher is actually implementing an experience in his/her classroom.

b. Projects involve external sharing and communication: Projects must promote peer-to-peer sharing and emphasize the need for external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages teachers to share their experiences with other teachers and with the environmental education community, e.g., through mentoring opportunities, presentations at conferences, in-school service days, or other public forums.

c. Projects demonstrate partnerships: Project proposals should include multiple partners. A partnership is a collaborative working relationship between two or more organizations. All partners should be actively involved in the project, not just supply equipment or curricula. Letters of support from each partner must be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement. The California B-WET Program strongly encourages applicants to partner with schools and/or school systems.

d. Experiences are for all teachers: The California B-WET Program is strongly committed to expanding the knowledge and participation of teachers who serve a low income and underserved student population. At least 60% of the target audience served by this project will be from a low income or underserved student population. Please include the ethnic, social and gender demographics of the classroom participants, for example (46% Latinos, 80% free lunch, 15% females) and the

webpage(s) that was used to gather the demographic information.

e. Projects utilize NOAA products, services or personnel: Experiences that are enhanced by NOAA products, services, or personnel. NOAA has a wealth of applicable products and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can heighten the impact of outdoor experiences. For example, NOAA data can be used to supplement or contextualize the information collected by students. Additionally, NOAA professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and as natural resources stewards, thus promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers.

3. After School, Science Camps and Summer Programs

Recognizing that afterschool, science camps and summer programs have a role to play in providing meaningful experiences for students, the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries seeks projects that integrate the essential components of meaningful watershed educational experiences with programs that occur outside of a classroom setting and may be during non-school hours. Projects focused on this priority area must meet the criteria as set forth in Priority Area 1 (Section B1-a,c,d,e,f,g,h,i).

4. New Programs and Applicants

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is actively promoting new applicants to submit proposals for B-WET funding. The total funding amount for previously CA B-WET funded applicants or programs will be limited. If an applicant or program has received CA B-WET funding for three consecutive years, they may apply but available funding will be limited to about 10% of the amount available in each of the three regions.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 USC 893 a(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.

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 \$800,000 may be available in FY 2014 in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds. About \$350,000 will be made available to the San Francisco Bay area, about \$300,000 will be made available to the Monterey Bay area, and about \$150,000 will be made available to the Santa Barbara area. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries anticipates that approximately 15 grants will be awarded with these funds.

About 90% of the total amount available will be set aside for new applicants or programs. About 10% will be made available for continuation proposals.

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries anticipates that typical project awards for the identified priority areas will range from \$30,000 to \$60,000.

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. In appropriate circumstances, NOAA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of a proposed project. If NOAA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated or selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

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. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the B-WET competitive process are anticipated, but will depend on funding levels and resources available to support new projects.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2014. Proposals may be considered eligible for continuation beyond the first project period. However, 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 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.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Whether the funding instrument is a grant or a cooperative agreement will be determined by the amount of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' involvement in the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries 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, nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, and Indian tribal governments.

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 service underserved areas. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program; however, the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries 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 with cash being the preferred method of contribution. Other Federal funds cannot be used as cost share/match.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

There are no other criteria that affect eligibility.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

1. Electronic submission

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>. You may access the electronic grant application for the California Bay Watershed Education and Training Program at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please note that applicants must locate the downloadable application package for this program by the FFO number (found on the first page of the FFO) or CFDA number (11.429). 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 website. 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.

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.

2. Hard copy submission

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission, hard copy applications will be accepted. A signed original and 2 copies may be submitted to Attn: Seaberry Nachbar, B-WET Program Manager, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Office, 99 Pacific Street, Building 455, Monterey, CA 93940. The closing deadline for applying through grants.gov is the same as for the paper submission noted in this announcement.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements:

1. Federal Forms

The required forms are as follows:

SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance

SF-424A: Budget Information, Non-construction Programs (if you are submitting a request for multi-year funding, an SF-424A must be submitted for each year)

SF-424B: Assurances, Non-Construction Programs

CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying

2. Proposals

Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. For an example proposal and budget narrative, please go to the National Marine Sanctuaries CA B-WET website at:

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html>).

a. Proposal Requirements:

Required elements for all submissions-

(1) Proposal format must be in at least a 12-point font and 1 ½ or double-spaced. The entire proposal narrative should not exceed 20 pages. The budget narrative, budget table, Federal forms and the Project Summary are not included in this 20 page limit.

(2) Appendices and supporting documentation may be included but may not exceed a total of 10-pages. Appendices may include information such as curriculum, resumes, and/or letters of endorsement. Additional informational material will be disregarded.

(3) Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore the entire application package (proposal and appendices) should not exceed 30-pages (this total does not include Federal forms or the budget narrative or budget table).

b. Proposal Format:

Proposals should include the following information and it is recommended that they follow the format outlined below:

(1) Project summary (1-page):

- Organization title.
- Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
- Address, telephone number, and email address of applicant and PI.
- Partner(s).
- Priority Area.
- Project title.
- Project duration.

- Summary of work to be performed (include number of teachers and/or students that will be involved in your project and total project cost per student/teacher.

- Total Federal funds requested.
 - Cost-sharing to be provided from non-Federal sources, if any. Specify whether contributions are project-related cash or in-kind.
 - Total project cost.
- (2) Project description: Need, target audience, objectives, what, where.
- Need: Provide a statement that describes the need for this type of project. Why are you proposing this project? Cite studies or sources, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project.
 - Target audience: Identify the target audience and demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience. Identify specifically how many students and/or teachers are involved in your project and their demographics.
 - Participant recruitment: Provide a plan of action that outlines how you will recruit your target audience and identify incentives to be used such as teacher stipends or continuing education credits.
 - Objectives: Explain your objectives and how you are going to accomplish these objectives. Objectives do not include the number of people served or the activities you and your audience(s) engage in. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible (please reference the CA B-WET website, when developing your objectives). Clearly explain how you will achieve your expected outputs and outcomes.
 - What: Provide a statement of your project that includes a clear statement of the work to be undertaken. Demonstrate how your project meets the criteria defined in the Program Priorities.
 - Where: Give a precise location of the project and the area(s) that will be served.

(3) Who: Organization leads and partners.

- Organization leads: Explain who from your organization will conduct the project. Include key individuals who will work on the project and a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. A staff biography or C.V for each individual that is participating significantly in the project is required. Please demonstrate to the reviewers that the staff employed is representative of the target audience needs (for example if you are working with a Latino audience, you have/will be employing a bi-lingual staff member).
- Partners/collaborators: List each partner organization, cooperator, or other key individuals who will work on the project. A letter of support from each partner must be included.

(4) Project timeline: Provide a project timeline in a table format that outlines the

project from beginning to end.

(5) 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. Up to 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal.

For this section, please include a logic model: Provide a graphic to display the outputs and outcomes developed through the project. An example of a basic logic model can be found on our website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html>.

In your evaluation plan, please describe how you will measure and document the outcomes and impacts of your project on your audience(s). How will your audience(s) be different after their involvement in your project and how will you measure those differences? The outcomes you measure should correlate to your goals and objectives and the California B-WET Program's definition of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences. Indicators of outcomes may be audience satisfaction with the project experience and changes in their knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behaviors. Indicators of outcomes do not include the number of people served or the activities you and your audience(s) engage in.

In this section include how and when you will gather evaluation data. Data can be quantitative and/or qualitative and data-gathering instruments might include (but are not limited to) pre- and post-tests, surveys, interviews, guided observations, or rubric-rated presentations. Please include in your supporting documents any evaluation tools that you will be using as a part of your evaluation.

Also explain how you will document your evaluation results and if your evaluation will be front-end (used to determine audience needs/understandings and plan a project), formative (used to improve a project) and/or summative (used to guide judgments about a project's impact and value). 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>.

Participation in B-WET National Evaluation

In addition to project evaluation, grantees may be asked to participate in data collection for the national B-WET evaluation. B-WET has created a cross-region, internal evaluation system to monitor program implementation and outcomes on an ongoing basis. Results of this evaluation will be used to make adjustments to B-WET Federal Funding Opportunities (FFOs) and activities in order to improve the program.

As part of this evaluation system, recipients of B-WET grants and teacher-participants in grantees' professional development programs may be asked to voluntarily complete online questionnaires to provide evaluation data. One individual from each grantee organization will be asked to complete a questionnaire once per

year of the award. For projects that work with teachers, the teacher-participants will be asked (using email addresses provided by the grantee organization) to complete one questionnaire at the close of their professional development and one after implementing Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences with their students (before the end of the following school year). Grantees should be able to complete their questionnaire within 30-60 minutes (depending on the nature of their program) and teachers, within 30 minutes. B-WET grantees and teachers who respond to the questionnaires will remain anonymous to B-WET and NOAA.

After receipt of an award, grantees may be asked to provide more information about how they plan to support this national evaluation effort, incorporate it into the project timeline, and ensure responses from participating teachers.

This data collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines (OMB Control No 0648-0658).

(6) Benefits or results expected: Identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities. Please include in this section your accomplishments to date:

- If you have not previously received a B-WET grant please describe your organization's background and accomplishments to date. Include any evaluation data and results that your organization may have conducted.

- If you have received a B-WET grant please include as much detail as possible on your accomplishments to date and lessons learned. List your objectives from previous years and provide accomplishments to date for each of the objectives. Provide as much detail as possible to demonstrate to reviewers that the project goals and objectives of your grant have been/are being met. Please include your evaluation results from your evaluation report, including the tools and methods that you used. Specifically include your evaluation summary.

(7) Outreach and Education: Explain how your project will work with the target audience to educate and inform others of the results of your project, and any products, outcomes, or benefits of your project.

(8) Budget narrative: The budget narrative should be composed of two parts, a budget table and a budget description. The budget narrative should include the total project costs that are required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description and includes contributions and donations. The budget narrative should 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. Please Note the following:

- Need for government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for assistance. Explain why other funding sources cannot fund all the proposed work.

- Sustainability- The California B-WET Program should not be considered a long-term source of funding; therefore it is crucial that you explain how you will ensure that ongoing programs, once initiated, will be sustained. If you have received multiple years of funding you must include how your project will be sustainable beyond B-WET funding and how you plan to continue meeting your goals and objectives.

- The budget may include an amount for indirect costs only if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government, see Funding Restrictions, Section IV.E.1. in the Full Funding Opportunity. If the applicant has an established indirect cost rate, a copy of the negotiated rate must be included with the application.

- 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.

(9) Supporting documentation: Provide any required documents, which includes:

- Letters of support from partners: If the applicant organization has partners, such as schools, state agencies, or other organizations, letters of commitment should be included from partners explaining their role in and/or funding of the proposed project. If no letters are included, it will be assumed the applicant has no partners;

- Letters of recommendation;

- Resumes;

- Evaluation tools;

The amount of information given in this section will depend on the type of project, but should be no more than 10 pages.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on January 16, 2014. Both hard copy and electronic proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

Important: All applicants, both electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. Electronic applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov is currently

extremely heavy, and if Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit applications in paper format. Paper applicants should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

E. Funding Restrictions

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.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Hard copy proposals can be sent to Seaberry Nachbar, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary office; 99 Pacific Street, Bldg 455, Monterey, CA 93940.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (35 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 California B-WET Program this includes the following categories and questions:

a. Connection to the greater marine or estuarine environment (5 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Does the project make a direct connection to the greater marine or coastal environment? Does the project discuss one or all of the National Marine Sanctuaries in California (i.e., the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, the Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, or the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary)? Does the proposal make an intentional connection to the watershed system and how actions within that system can affect the marine and estuarine environment? Specifically, does the project address the elements and activities as defined in Section I.B.1.a in the Full Funding Opportunity?

b. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (20 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Does the proposal clearly meet the definition of a Meaningful Watershed Experience? Does the experience focus around questions, problems, or issues pertaining to the San Francisco Bay watershed and/or coastal area, Monterey Bay watershed and/or coastal area, or the Santa Barbara Channel watershed and/or coastal area? Is the project design project-oriented, hands-on, investigative, and part of a sustained activity? Does the project focus on an emerging marine issue? Does the project include pre and post activities? Does the project address multiple disciplines? Specifically, does the project address the elements and activities as defined in Section I.B.1.c-e in the Full Funding Opportunity?

For Program Priority 2, does the project proposal provide sufficient materials, resources, and information for the teacher to conduct a Meaningful Watershed Experience on his/her own? Is the project designed so that the teacher is encouraged to implement and conduct a Meaningful Watershed Experience in his/her classroom?

c. Partnerships (5 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Does the proposal include partnerships? Is the partnership a working relationship with all entities contributing to the project? Are there letters of support from each partner? Does the proposal outline the specific activity and function of each partner? Do the partners enhance the project? Does the applicant partner with a school division or school system? Specifically, does the project address the elements and activities as defined in Section I.B.1.g. and Section I.B.2.c in the Full Funding Opportunity?

d. Target audience (5 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Does the applicant work with an underserved or low-income population? Specifically, does the applicant address project elements and activities under Section I.B.1.h. and Section I.B.2.d in the Full Funding Opportunity?

2. Technical merit (35 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 California B-WET Program this includes the following categories and questions:

a. Proposal requirements and format (5 points): For this criteria, points will be awarded based on the observance to the proposal technical and format requirements outlined in Section IV.B.2.a and b. This includes proposal length, font size and compliance with all of the information that should be provided in the format section.

b. Integration with school program (10 points): For Program Priority 1 and 2: Does the proposal clearly outline how the project is an integral part of the instructional program? Does the proposal demonstrate how the project is aligned with the Content Standards for California Public Schools and the California Education and the Environment Initiative? Does the proposal just list the standards or demonstrate how their project supports them? Specifically, does the proposal address project elements and activities under Section I.B.1.b in the Full Funding Opportunity?

For Priority Area 3 only, does the applicant demonstrate how the summer program, afterschool program or the science camp builds on and/or adds to the knowledge and information that the students are receiving during the school year.

c. NOAA products, services or personnel (5 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Does the applicant utilize NOAA products or services focused on marine and coastal issues? Does the applicant use NOAA personnel to enhance their project? Specifically, does the applicant address the elements and activities as defined in Section I.B.1.i. and Section I.B.2.e in the Full Funding Opportunity?

d. Objectives (5 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives are realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the proposal suggest a new approach to environmental education or just an application of previously accepted approaches? Are the project outcomes measurable and have significant and lasting benefits for teachers and students?

e. Evaluation (10 points): For Program Priority 1, 2, and 3: Does the project evaluation description meet the guidelines offered in Section IV.B.2.b(6) in the Full Funding Opportunity? Specifically, does the evaluation component of the project focus on measuring changes in participants (changes can be in knowledge, attitudes, skills or conservation actions)? Are the methods for gathering evaluation data systematic and if replicated, would they gather reliable qualitative and/or quantitative data? Can the results be used to inform programming decisions (either planning the program, making changes to improve the program or judging the program's impact and value)?

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 California B-WET Program this includes the following questions:

Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Does the proposal include staff biographies or C.V.s of the Principle Investigators and other staff members? Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the target audience? Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the Content Standards for California Public Schools? Does the applicant document past collaborations with schools or school systems? Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Are the partners involved in the project qualified?

4. Project costs (15 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. For the California B-WET Program this includes the following questions: Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to leverage other resources? Is the nature of the cost share cash or in-kind? Is the budget request reasonable and does the applicant justify the proposed budget request? Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students and teachers in contact with the environment? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and/or are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project? Does the applicant demonstrate sustainability beyond the project period? Does the applicant demonstrate that the project will continue after NOAA funding has expired?

5. Outreach and education (5 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the California B-WET Program this includes the following questions: Does the project involve external sharing and communication? Does the target audience share their findings, experiences, or results to their peers or their community? Specifically, does the project address the elements and activities in Section I.B.1.f and I.B.2.b in the Full Funding Opportunity?

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation of the Application

Once a full application has been received by the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and priorities of the application. If applications do not comply, they will be returned without further review.

2. Merit Review

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will be evaluated and scored by independent reviewers in three review panels. Each panel will be

comprised of reviewers in each of the three regions (San Francisco Bay Area, Monterey Bay Area, and Santa Barbara Bay Area). Reviewers serving on the panels may be Federal or non-Federal experts in areas relevant to the priorities under consideration. Each proposal will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. The B-WET Program Manager will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review panels. Before the panels convene, each reviewer will individually evaluate and score proposals using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A above. Scores and comments will be submitted to the Federal Program Officer, and the individual reviewers' rating will be averaged for each application to establish a preliminary rank order for each panel. The panels will convene separately to review the ranking and comments, and discuss the projects as a group. During the panel meeting, reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Reviewers must individually submit final ranking to the B-WET Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. No consensus advice will be given by the review panel members. The reviewers' final ranking will be averaged for each application to produce a rank order of the proposals for each of the panels.

The B-WET Program Manager will make their recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official based on rank order of each panel and the selection factors listed below.

C. Selection Factors

The B-WET Program Manager will review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel. The average numerical ranking from the review panel will be the primary consideration in deciding which of the proposals will be recommended for funding to the Selecting Official.

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

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds;
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding

by NOAA or other federal agencies;

4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.B.1-5 and Section III.B. of the Full Funding Opportunity;

5. Applicant's prior award performance;

6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups;

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

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

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications and subsequent notification to applicants will be completed by May 30, 2014. Funds are expected to be awarded by August 1, 2014, which is the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive electronic notification that the application has been funded from the NOAA Grants Management Division. Electronic notification will be issued to each successful applicant with instructions on how to access the Grants.gov system and view the terms of the award. The annual reporting requirements are also included in the award package.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the collaboration duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement in the activities of each partnership will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Project activities should not be initiated in the expectation of Federal funding until a notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Office.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding (declined) or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements prescribed in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. 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. A copy of the notice may be obtained at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

In addition, please also include the following language relating to Felony and Tax Certification for Corporations:

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.

2. 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 oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

3. 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, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, 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.

4. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards 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 Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over \$25,000.

"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 applicant awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM). The link is below:"

<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>

Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25. The link is below:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl".

5. 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.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports and a comprehensive evaluation report.

1. Financial Reports

All financial reports shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants On-Line system, <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. Deadlines and financial forms can be found at: <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/finforms.shtml>.

2. Performance Reports

Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Electronic submission of performance reports is required through the NOAA Grants On-Line system, <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. The first semi-annual report must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. The second semi-annual report will serve as the comprehensive final report. Examples of format requirements are available on the National Marine Sanctuaries CA B-WET website at: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html>).

The final comprehensive report shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants On-Line system and grant recipients may be asked, not required, to submit output and outcome data into a new database that will collect final accomplishments from grant programs.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the National Marine Sanctuaries CA B-WET website at: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html>) or contact Seaberry Nachbar, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary office; 99 Pacific Street, Bldg 455, Monterey, CA 93940, or by phone at 831-647-4204.

VIII. Other Information

No other information.