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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: 2016 Pacific Northwest Bay-Watershed Education and Training

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2016-2004700

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

Dates: Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific time on February 11, 2016. Proposals being submitted in hard copy must be postmarked or provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m., Pacific Time. Both hard copy and electronic proposals received (or postmarked) after that time will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. No email and/or facsimile applications will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA B-WET is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. Funded projects provide meaningful watershed educational experiences for students, related professional development for teachers, and help to support regional education and environmental priorities in the Pacific Northwest.

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 supports experiential learning through competitive grant awards in specific geographic regions. Prior to 2008 NOAA B-WET programs were limited to Chesapeake Bay, California and Hawaii. In 2009, the program expanded to include New England, the northern Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific Northwest. This solicitation is for the Pacific Northwest Bay-Watershed Education and Training (PNW B-WET) program. The PNW 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 Pacific Northwest. For purposes of this solicitation, "Pacific Northwest" is limited to the states of Oregon and Washington.

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, engendering discovery and wonder, 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).

B. Program Priorities

This Federal funding opportunity meets NOAA's Mission Goal of healthy ocean ecosystems, helping to ensure that ocean, estuarine, and related ecosystems and the species that inhabit them are vibrant and sustainable in the face of challenges.

Proposals should address one of the four priority areas of interest: (1) Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students; (2) Professional Development for Teachers related to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences; (3) Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences focused on Ocean Acidification for Students; and (4) Professional Development for Teachers related to Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences focused on Ocean Acidification. If proposals do not address one of the areas of interest, they will be returned

without further review.

All proposals submitted, regardless of the area of interest, should address the following universal elements:

- Experiences 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. In addition, the inclusion of NOAA products and services in classroom activities will increase awareness of the agency's vast resources and may lead to better understanding of its mission. NOAA personnel have technical knowledge and experience that can serve to complement classroom teachers' strengths and augment the array of resources for learning. Additionally, these professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and as natural resources stewards, thus promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers.

For more information about NOAA resources, please visit:

NOAA Assets: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html

NOAA in Your Backyard:

http://www.education.noaa.gov/Special_Topics/NOAA_in_Your_Backyard.html

- Involve external sharing and communication.

Projects should promote peer-to-peer 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 or with the community, e.g., through a mentoring program, newsletters, journals, or community presentations.

- 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.

- Be aligned to the NOAA Education Plan.

NOAA Education Plan: http://www.education.noaa.gov/noaa_educ.html

- Be aligned to environmental literacy principles, as appropriate.

"Ocean Literacy: Essential Principles of Ocean Sciences"

<http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/>

"Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science"

<http://www.climate.noaa.gov/education/>

Note: estuarine and watershed concepts should be tied to the Ocean Literacy principles.

Proposals should address one of the four priority areas of interest:

1. Priority (1) - Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students -- The NOAA Pacific Northwest B-WET Program seeks proposals for projects that provide opportunities for students to participate in Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences. The marine and estuarine environment and the surrounding watershed provide excellent opportunities 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 watershed environment can provide a genuine, locally-relevant source of knowledge that can be used to help advance student learning skills across the entire school curriculum.

In addition to the universal elements listed above, proposals submitted under this area of interest should address the following specific elements and types of activities that define a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience:

(See revised 2015 definition at <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet.html#page=about>)

- Experiences are investigative or project oriented.

Experiences should be centered around questions, problems, and issues and be investigated through data collection, observation, and hands-on activities. Experiences should stimulate observation, motivate critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, and instill confidence in students. Where appropriate, technology such as computers, probeware, and GPS equipment should be integrated throughout the instructional process. Experiences such as tours, gallery visits, simulations, demonstrations, or "nature walks" may be instructionally useful, but alone do not constitute a meaningful experience.

- Experiences are an integral part of the instructional program.

Experiences should be clearly part of what is occurring concurrently in the classroom. The experience should be part of the curriculum and aligned with the academic standards. Experiences should occur where and when they fit into the instructional sequence. Experiences do not have to be based solely on science disciplines. Experiences could involve the use of materials, resources, and instruments to address multiple topics, such as maritime

heritage, history, economics, math, English, art, and the cultural significance of our natural resources. Experiences make appropriate connections between subject areas and reflect an integrated approach to learning.

- Experiences are part of a sustained activity.

“Meaningful” experiences are part of a sustained activity that stimulates and motivates the student from beginning to end. Though a watershed experience itself may occur as one specific event occurring in one day, the total duration leading up to and following the experience should involve a significant investment of instructional time. An experience should consist of three general parts: 1) a preparation phase; 2) an action phase; and 3) a reflection phase. Projects should provide teachers with the support, materials, resources, and information needed to conduct these three parts. The preparation phase should focus on a question, problem, or issue and involve students in discussions about it. The action phase should include multiple outdoor experiences sufficient to conduct the project, make the observations, or collect the data required. It is strongly encouraged that the action phase includes restoration projects or activities that result in the environment changing. The reflection phase should refocus on the question, problem, or issue; analyze the conclusions reached; evaluate the results; assess the activity and the learning; and include sharing and communication of the results.

- Experiences consider the watershed as a system.

Meaningful watershed educational experiences should make a direct connection to the marine or estuarine environment. Experiences do not have to be water-based activities; as long as there is an intentional connection made to the watershed, water quality, and the coastal and marine environment, watershed experiences may include terrestrial activities (e.g., erosion control, buffer creation, groundwater protection, and pollution prevention).

2. (Priority (2) - Professional Development for Teachers related to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences -- The NOAA Pacific Northwest B-WET Program seeks proposals for projects that provide teachers opportunities for professional development in the area of environmental education. 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.

In addition to the universal elements listed above, proposals submitted under this area of interest should be designed so that teachers not only understand what a Meaningful

Watershed Educational Experience is (see section I.B.1 of this announcement), but why this type of pedagogy is important. The goal is to ensure that professional development experiences for the teacher ultimately benefit the student. Projects should be designed so that teachers are capable of conducting meaningful watershed educational experiences and provide the resources and necessary technical support needed to implement an experience in their classroom.

3. Priority (3) - Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences focused on Ocean Acidification for Students -- Our carbon emissions are making the ocean more acidic, which threatens life in our coastal seas that we rely upon and are intimately connected to. Education is vital to improving the public's awareness and understanding of this phenomenon called ocean acidification. This includes not only increasing the general awareness of ocean acidification, but also increasing the understanding of the scientific knowledge and impacts of the ocean's changing chemistry. The need to broaden education and engage students about ocean education is a main goal of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Therefore, the Pacific Northwest B-WET Program seeks projects that encompass the components of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for students but are focused on ocean acidification.

In addition to the universal elements listed above, proposals submitted under this area of interest must meet the criteria as set forth in Priority Area 1 (see section I.B.1 of this announcement) and should be aligned with the NOAA Ocean Acidification Education Implementation Plan goals (ftp://ftp.oar.noaa.gov/oa/Final_OAEIP_9-14.pdf) (specifically Goals 2 and 3). For more information on NOAA efforts as they relate to ocean acidification, please visit the NOAA Ocean Acidification Program: (<http://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/AreasofFocus/EducationOutreach.aspx>).

Proposals in this priority area should also consider integrating any of the following elements into their project design:

- a) Ocean acidification learning materials and field experiences (For example, designing or integrating tools focused on monitoring, like build a buoy, or linking to the IOOS data sets and/or incorporating hands-on activities like those highlighted in Understanding Ocean Acidification website) <http://cisanctuary.org/ocean-acidification/> ;
- b) Public student outreach or congresses to showcase learning and innovation;

4. Priority (4) - Professional Development for Teachers related to Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences focused on Ocean Acidification -- Our carbon emissions are making the ocean more acidic, which threatens life in our coastal seas that we rely upon and are intimately connected to. Education is vital to improving the public's awareness and understanding of this phenomenon called ocean acidification. This includes not only

increasing the general awareness of ocean acidification, but also increasing the understanding of the scientific knowledge and impacts of the ocean's changing chemistry. The need to broaden education and engage teachers about ocean education is a main goal of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Therefore, the Pacific Northwest B-WET Program seeks projects that encompass the components of Professional Development for teachers related to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences but are focused on ocean acidification. In addition to the universal elements listed above, proposals submitted under this area of interest must meet the criteria as set forth in Priority Area 2 (see section I.B.2 of this announcement) and should be aligned with the NOAA Ocean Acidification Education Implementation Plan (ftp://ftp.oar.noaa.gov/oa/Final_OAEIP_9-14.pdf) goals (specifically Goals 2 and 3). For more information on NOAA efforts as they relate to ocean acidification, please visit the NOAA Ocean Acidification Program:

<http://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/AreasofFocus/EducationOutreach.aspx>

Proposals in this priority area should also consider integrating any of the following elements into their project design:

- a) Ocean acidification learning materials and field experiences (For example, designing or integrating tools focused on monitoring, like build a buoy, or linking to the IOOS data sets and/or incorporating hands-on activities like those highlighted in Understanding Ocean Acidification website) <http://cisanctuary.org/ocean-acidification/> ;
- b) Professional development system coordinated across existing providers;
- c) Development of Ocean Acidification Literacy Scale as it relates to the Ocean Literacy Principles.

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.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

It is anticipated that up to approximately \$450,000 will be available in FY2016 for all Pacific Northwest projects. NOAA PNW B-WET anticipates making approximately eight awards during FY 2016 for both new and renewal projects.

The total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not be less than \$25,000 or more than \$60,000 for a project period up to one year. The PNW B-WET has existing grants that were identified as renewal projects in previous application processes. Therefore, funding for new proposals may be limited due to funding of renewal projects.

Proposals may be considered eligible for renewal for up to two years beyond the first project period. However, funds will be made available for only a project period up to 12-months and any renewal of the award to extend the project period will depend on submission of a successful renewal proposal subject to merit review and selection, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding to renew the award. No assurance for funding a renewal project exists. Renewal grants may be awarded to continue these projects under this announcement pending successful review of a new proposal (renewal grants), and adequate progress reports and/or site visits. Projects being considered for renewal will be scored according to the same criteria as projects competing for initial funding, but renewal proposals may be given priority over new proposals.

Projects that plan on renewal must include in their first-year submission a full description of the activities and budget for the first year as described in this announcement, and a summary description of the proposed work and estimated budget for each subsequent year. If selected for initial funding, an applicant seeking funding for renewal will be required to submit a full proposal each subsequent year by the deadline announced in the following competitive cycle. In addition to the requirements for new proposals, renewal projects should include the accomplishments to date on the previous year's grant in their subsequent grant submissions.

Applicants may apply for renewal for up to three years under the same award number and project. Applicants may apply for another three year period but the project proposal must outline a new component, such as a new target audience, new priority area, or new geographic location.

If funding is not available for any awards, NOAA may choose to carry proposals recommended for funding forward until funding becomes available. 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 or not receiving an award.

Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs for a non-research award 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

Applicants should not list a project start date before August 1, 2016. Applications should cover a project period of up to one year's duration. Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire period. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Whether the funding instrument is a grant or a cooperative agreement will be determined by the amount of involvement by the federal government in the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if the NOAA PNW B-WET Program shares responsibility for management, control, direction, or performance of the project with the recipient. Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Chapter 5.C. of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Grants Manual, currently available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNJd>. Specific terms regarding substantial involvement will be contained in special award conditions.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-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. Individuals are not eligible to apply. While applicants do not need to be located in the targeted geographical regions specified in the program objectives, the primary participants of the projects must be located in the geographical regions specified in the program objectives. 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. Proposals involving any of the above institutions are encouraged.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

This is not a research award, and no cost sharing is required under this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the electronic Federal portal for grant applications, Grants.gov. You may access the electronic grant application for the Pacific Northwest 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.

If an applicant has problems downloading, please contact 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. For non-Windows computer systems, please see <http://www.grants.gov/MacSupport> for information on how to download and submit an application through Grants.gov.

Applicants unable to effectively access application materials electronically should refer to a NOAA official listed in Section VII. of this Announcement to obtain the application materials.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements:

1. Federal Forms:
 - a) Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424.
 - b) Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: SF-424A.
 - c) Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B
 - d) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL
 - e) NEPA questionnaire, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf>

2. Proposals

Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of PNW B-WET or the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

(a) Required elements for all submissions:

- i. Components of the proposal outlined in Section IV. A. 2.(b).i.-vii. should be submitted as a single PDF document and uploaded into the Grants.gov system as a single PDF document.
- ii. 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, Project Summary, Data Management Plan, and if applicable, any supporting National Environmental Policy Act materials are not included in this 20 page limit or the limit on Appendices in the next paragraph.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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 are required to include the following information using the format outlined below:

- i. Project Summary (1 page limit):
 - Organization title.
 - Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
 - Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).
 - Priority area of interest for which you are applying
 - Project title.
 - Project duration (up to 12-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 renewal beyond the first year.

- Summary of work to be performed, including primary objectives. Succinctly describe the project and include number of teachers and/or students to be reached, as well as geographic area to be reached. This will be used as a project summary in funding reports for NOAA B-WET.
- List primary project partner(s)
- Budget Information:
 - Total Federal funding requested this fiscal year;
 - Cost-sharing is not required and is not considered in the evaluation process, but if an applicant includes funds on the project budget from non-Federal sources, it should be listed and should comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.306.. Specify whether contributions are project-related cash or third party in-kind contributions of goods and services;
 - Total project cost this fiscal year; and
 - Cost per student and/or teacher.

ii. Project Description: Describe in detail what your project will achieve. Proposals should outline how the project proposes to implement the various components of a meaningful watershed educational experience, including alignment with appropriate state education standards and/or state environmental literacy plans. Applicants should include:

- 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 Education Project Evaluation from California B-WET (<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html>), 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. If you have previously received a B-WET grant for three years and you are reapplying for another three year grant, please list the new components of your project, in addition to the elements listed above.

- Where: Provide location of the project and the area(s) that will be served. Include school districts, counties and congressional districts served.

iii. 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. Identify key individuals who will work on the project and a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. A staff biography or Curriculum Vitae for each individual that is participating significantly in the project is required.

iv. Partnerships: 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 in an appendix (see "Supporting documentation" below). Wherever reasonable proposals should include partnerships with school divisions and/or the state department of education (if the applicant is not one of these entities). Projects are also encouraged to collaborate with NOAA entities as partners. More information about NOAA assets and educational resources can be found at: <http://www.education.noaa.gov/>. Partner costs may be included in the budget as Federal or non-Federal funds, or partners may contribute off-budget leverage if the level of commitment is effectively documented in the support letter.

v. Project timeline: Provide a project timeline in a table format that outlines the project from beginning to end.

vi. 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.

vii. 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. Proposals should include a logic model that graphically displays project inputs, outputs and outcomes. 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 PNW 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 B-WET program, document its value, and better tailor it to program audiences. Furthermore, the system will generate a data set that will be valuable to researchers and has the potential to inform the field of environmental education more broadly. Success of this effort depends on grantee participation, so applicants are strongly encouraged to review the information about the national evaluation system available here:

http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet_eval.php) and consider how they can support it as part of their projects.

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 (at 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. NOAA will only view the resulting data in aggregate at the national or regional level, however grantees will receive a password-protected report link to allow them to view data from teacher participants of their project in aggregate.

Grantees are encouraged to provide information about how they plan to support this national evaluation system, incorporate it into the project timeline, and ensure responses from participating teachers as part of their application. More information, including all of the survey instruments, is available on the NOAA B-WET national website here:
http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet_eval.php

Grantees should review the information available and take this into consideration in the planning for their project evaluations. For example:

- Grantees may not need to include questions that will be answered through the teacher instrument in their own evaluations.
- Wherever possible grantees should try to incorporate participation in the evaluation system into existing requirements for professional development program completion. For example, on completion of the teacher professional development survey, teachers will receive some program incentive.

Note that this evaluation system is not intended to fully replace project level evaluation. While grantees will have access to their teacher's data from the evaluation system, the national evaluation may not provide the level of detail needed to fully understand, describe, and improve specific grant projects. Grantees are therefore encouraged to balance these needs within the 10% of their budget that is recommended for evaluation.

Additional information about this project, including background, FAQs, survey instruments, and suggested text for communicating with your teacher participants about this project, is available here: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet_eval.php

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

viii. **Benefits or Results Expected:** Identify and document the results or outcomes to be derived from the proposed activities in this project period and over the entire prospective project. Include the number of students and/or teachers directly affected by this grant this project year. Also, include a per-teacher and/or per-student calculation for this project year.

In this section, please include 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.

ix. Budget Narrative (not included in the page limit):

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. See 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles” for additional information. 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 Pacific Northwest 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. A de minimus indirect cost rate of 10% will be provided to non-federal entities that have never had a negotiated indirect cost rate. If the applicant has an established indirect cost rate, a copy of the negotiated rate should be included with the application (see Funding Restrictions, Section IV.E in the Full Funding Opportunity).
- 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.

The budget narrative should be composed of two parts, a budget description and a budget table.

- The budget description should include:
 - - Items noted above (IV.B.ix);
 - The total project costs that are required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description, including contributions and donations from sources other than NOAA;
 - The information needed to determine how the numbers outlined in the Budget Information form (SF-424A) were derived;
 - Descriptions of funds in the specific budget categories outlined in the SF-424A form, such as personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs;
 - For any equipment, defined in 2 CFR §200.33 as “tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000,” a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. All equipment purchases must include a lease versus purchase analysis. For more information on equipment, see 2 CFR §200.313;
 - As applicable, non-profit and university applicants must identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process. Property disposition must be consistent with the requirements under 2 CFR §200.313(e).
 - Description of expenditures for any renewal years (if applicable). Renewal year requests should also be reflected in the budget table;
 - Applicants must include the budgets and budget justifications of subawards and contracts. Information must include the name of the entity receiving funds, the location of the entity receiving the funds (e.g., city, state, and Congressional district), the location of the entity receiving funds (city, state, and Congressional district), and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract/subaward. All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §§200.330-200.332 for subawards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements.

- For the budget table, applicants should use the NOAA B-WET Budget Justification Spreadsheet available online (under Resources) at:
<http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet.html>

- x. Supporting documentation: This is limited to ten pages total except as indicated. Provide any additional documentation, including:
 - 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; (unlimited page limit)

- Letters of recommendation (encouraged from users and other non-partner entities - limited to three pages);
- Resumes or Curricula Vitae (limited to five pages);
- Evaluation tools and/or logic model (limited to five pages);
- Per Section VI.B.6. of this Announcement, a data sharing plan of no more than two pages should be separately attached.
- If applicable, any supporting material attached separately attached related to the National Environmental Policy Act policy described in Section VI.B. is not subject to page limits.

The amount of information given in this section will depend on the type of project. Additional informational material (CDs, DVDs, program brochures etc.) will be discarded prior to review

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

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, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, currently available at <http://go.usa.govc/TbMk> .

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific time on February 4, 2016. Proposals being submitted in hard copy must be postmarked or provided to a delivery service on or before 5 p.m., Pacific Time. Both hard copy and electronic proposals received (or postmarked) after that time will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by an automated receipt of the date and time of submission. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. No email and/or facsimile applications will be accepted.

Use of Grants.gov is encouraged. If use of Grants.gov is impractical for technical or other reasons, paper copy applications will be accepted at the office of NOAA Olympic Coast

National Marine Sanctuary, ATTN: Kevin Grant, 115 East Railroad Ave., Suite #301, Port Angeles, WA, 98362. Paper copies may be submitted by postal mail or commercial delivery service. Applications submitted by mail must include a SF-424 form with original ink signature and date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before the same date and time as the electronic deadline; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. Paper applications received more than three business days after the deadline will not be reviewed, and applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications. No email or fax copies will be accepted. To submit a hand-delivered application, due to facility security applicants should make advance arrangements with NOAA by contacting an official listed in Section VII. of this Announcement, and the application must be received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on the deadline date.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

If indirect costs are requested, indirect-cost-rate agreements should be included for the applicant organization and the negotiated rate must be requested. If an applicant does not have an indirect cost rate and wants to include indirect costs, the applicant has up to 90 days after the award start date to submit an indirect cost proposal or cost allocation plan, as described in Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, currently available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for sub-awardees, however indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee. Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414 "Indirect (F&A) Costs," any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.403 "Factors affecting allowability of costs." If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer

NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway
9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

Construction is not an allowable activity under this program. Therefore, applications will not be accepted for construction projects.

All costs must be reasonable, allowable and allocable. Details about allowable costs can be found in 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles.”

G. Other Submission Requirements

Please be advised that potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. An organization’s one-time registration or the annual renewal process may take up to three weeks or more to complete, so please allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. To use Grants.gov, an applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number, which is free, and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>; periodic renewals are required. Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration. (Note: Your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.)

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number listed in the Executive Summary of this Announcement. Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. 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 or valid electronic signatures on forms at a later date.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or

has been rejected because of errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review, and the validation time is deemed the time NOAA received it.

Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Because first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks or more, it is strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their SAM registration may need to be renewed prior to submitting to Grants.gov. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days or longer to establish. Please consider these notes in developing your submission timeline.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

MWEEs for Students (including Ocean Acidification focus)

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. The projects importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposal to the program goals will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Experiences are investigative or project oriented (15 points)
 - Students focus on a local environmental question, problem, or issue requiring background research and investigation;
 - Students participate in multiple outdoor field activities sufficient to collect the data or make observations required for answering the research questions and informing student actions, or as part of the issue definition and background research;
 - Students analyze and evaluate the results of projects and investigations.
- b. MWEE is an integral part of the instructional program (15 points)
 - Part of the classroom instruction, not an ancillary event;
 - Project is aligned with the state learning standards;

- Applicant does not just list the standards but demonstrates how their project supports the standards;
 - Project is multidisciplinary;
 - Experiences are part of a sustained activity; Consists of three parts- preparation, outdoor and analysis;
 - Project includes hands-on and investigative activities;
 - Experiences consider the watershed as a system; Connects to marine or estuarine environment; ** or ** For the Ocean Acidification priority area – Applicant increases general awareness of ocean acidification and the understanding of the scientific knowledge and impacts of the ocean's changing chemistry.
- c. Projects are focused on stewardship activities that make an environmental impact (5 points)
- Students participate in an age appropriate project during which they take action to address environmental issues at the personal or societal level.

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. Technical merit will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Proposal meets all technical requirements and objectives (10 points)
- Proposal meets all requirements for format;
 - Project description is clearly defined in sufficient detail and realistic;
 - Objectives are clearly focused and well defined;
 - Objectives are realistic and attainable;
 - Objectives are measurable;
 - Project is likely to achieve stated objectives and outcomes.
- b. Applicant demonstrates how the project is aligned to NOAA Education Plan and Ocean Literacy (5 points)
- Applicant demonstrates how their project is aligned and supports one or more of the goals and strategies of the NOAA Education Plan;
 - Applicant demonstrates how their project is aligned with one or more of the fundamental principles of Ocean Literacy;
 - Applicant demonstrates how their project is aligned with one or more of the fundamental principles of Climate Literacy.
- c. Applicant utilizes NOAA programs or personnel (5 points)

- Applicant utilizes NOAA programs or personnel;
 - Applicant demonstrates knowledge of the NOAA program that will be utilized OR that the NOAA personnel has been contacted and is committed to participating.
- d. Applicant demonstrates partnerships through letters of support and partner involvement (5 points)
- Each partner contributes to the program;
 - Applicant has letters of support from each partner;
 - One or more partners are from the school district;
 - Partners involved in the project are qualified.
- e. Applicant demonstrates how the project outcomes will be evaluated (10 points)
- The evaluation focuses on measuring changes in participants;
 - The evaluation focuses on methods for gathering data that are systematic and replicable;
 - The results can be used to inform programming decisions;
 - The indicators of outcomes are appropriate for the project;
 - The data gathering instruments are appropriate for the audience and the outcomes to be measured;
 - The results of the evaluation will help guide the assessments of the project's effectiveness, impact and/or 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. Overall qualifications of applicants will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Applicant shows the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects (5 points);
- b. Proposal includes resumes of the staff members involved in the project (3 points);
- c. Applicant demonstrates knowledge of the target audience (2 points).

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. Project costs will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Budget request is reasonable and justifiable (5 points);
- b. Significant percentage of the budget is directly related to bringing students in contact with the environment (3 points);
- c. Amount of overhead is justifiable and a significant percentage of the amount is going

to project implementation (2 points);

- d. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits are only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project (3 points);
- e. Applicant demonstrates sustainability beyond the project period and that the project will continue after NOAA funding has expired (2 points).

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.

Outreach and education will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Project involves external sharing and communications (3 points);
- b. Proposal describes how target audience will share their findings, experiences, or results to their peers or their community (2 points).

MWEE Professional Development for Teachers (including Ocean Acidification focus)

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. The projects importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposal to the program goals will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Projects should provide teachers the understanding and essence of a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) (20 points)
 - Instructs teachers of the components of a MWEE;
 - Provides opportunities for the teachers to engage in outdoor activities that are transferable back to the classroom.
- b. Teacher Professional Development should lead to implementation of MWEE in the classroom (10 points)
 - Provides teachers the tools and resources needed to conduct MWEEs in their classroom
**or **For the Ocean Acidification priority area –Provides teachers the necessary resources to increase their student's awareness of Ocean Acidification and the understanding of the scientific knowledge and impacts of the ocean's changing chemistry;
 - Provides teachers with a follow up and access to help during classroom implementation;
 - Provides incentive to implement a MWEE in the classroom.

- c. Target audience includes underserved or underrepresented community (5 points)
 - Applicant works with underserved or underrepresented teachers that serve this community;
 - Applicant includes the demographics of the audience that they are targeting.

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. Technical merit will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Proposal meets all technical requirements and objectives (10 points)
 - Proposal meets all requirements for format;
 - Project description is clearly defined in sufficient detail and realistic;
 - Objectives are clearly focused and well defined;
 - Objectives are realistic and attainable;
 - Objectives are measurable;
 - Project is likely to achieve stated objectives and outcomes.
- b. Applicant demonstrates how the project is aligned to NOAA Education Plan and Ocean Literacy (5 points)
 - Applicant demonstrates how their project is aligned and supports one or more of the goals and strategies of the NOAA Education Plan;
 - Applicant demonstrates how their project is aligned with one or more of the fundamental principles of Ocean Literacy;
 - Applicant demonstrates how their project is aligned with one or more of the fundamental principles of Climate Literacy.
- c. Applicant utilizes NOAA programs or personnel (5 points)
 - Applicant utilizes NOAA programs or personnel;
 - Applicant demonstrates knowledge of the NOAA program that will be utilized OR that the NOAA personnel has been contacted and is committed to participating.
- d. Applicant demonstrates partnerships through letters of support and partner involvement (5 points)
 - Each partner contributes to the program;
 - Applicant has letters of support from each partner;
 - One or more partners are from the school district;
 - Partners involved in the project are qualified.

- e. Applicant demonstrates how the project outcomes will be evaluated (10 points)
 - The evaluation focuses on measuring changes in participants;
 - The evaluation focuses on methods for gathering data that are systematic and replicable;
 - The results can be used to inform programming decisions;
 - The indicators of outcomes are appropriate for the project;
 - The data gathering instruments are appropriate for the audience and the outcomes to be measured;
 - The results of the evaluation will help guide the assessments of the project's effectiveness, impact and/or 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. Overall qualifications of applicants will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Applicant shows the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects (5 points);
- b. Proposal includes resumes of the staff members involved in the project (3 points);
- c. Applicant demonstrates knowledge of the target audience (2 points).

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. Project costs will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Budget request is reasonable and justifiable (5 points);
- b. Significant percentage of the budget is directly related to bringing students in contact with the environment (3 points);
- c. Amount of overhead is justifiable and a significant percentage of the amount is going to project implementation (2 points);
- d. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits are only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project (3 points);
- e. Applicant demonstrates sustainability beyond the project period and that the project will continue after NOAA funding has expired (2 points).

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. Outreach and education will be scored using the following measures:

- a. Project involves external sharing and communications (3 points);
- b. Proposal describes how target audience will share their findings, experiences, or results to their peers or their community (2 points).

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation of the Application

Once a full application has been timely 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. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

2. Merit Review

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will be evaluated and scored by a minimum of three independent reviewers. Reviewers may be Federal or non-Federal experts in areas relevant to the priorities under consideration. The B-WET Program Manager will neither vote nor score applications as part of the review. Each reviewer will individually evaluate and score proposals using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A. above. The Federal Program Officer will establish a preliminary rank order based on the individual reviewers' ratings.

A review panel will then convene to evaluate the rankings and comments and discuss the proposals 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. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, 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.

Renewal proposals will be considered for renewal based on the comments and feedback from the panel meeting and will independently recommended with either a yes- renew, or a no- do not renew/fund. New proposals and proposals considered for renewal will be scored using the same criteria as outlined above, but renewal proposals may be given priority over new proposals as described in Section V.C. below.

3. Project Selection

The B-WET Program Manager will review the ranking of the proposals and

recommendations of the review panel. The B-WET Program Manager will make their recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official, who is expected to be the Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries or designee, based on rank order of each panel and the selection factors listed in Section V.C. below. The 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. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the recommendations of the review panel, and recommendations of the 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 Selection Factors described in Section V.C. of this Announcement. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future without re-competition, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. An applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant and NOAA officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as described in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, and other legislation.

4. Grants Management Review

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make

arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award.

Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. NOAA also reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. In addition, NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management requirements referenced in Section IV.C. of this Announcement, and if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final and there is no right of appeal.

C. Selection Factors

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. Renewal proposals may be given priority over new proposals;
7. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups;
8. 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.

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 proposals will occur during the winter of 2015 and early 2016, and funding is expected to begin August of 2016. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to August 1, 2016.

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. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer to an institution's Authorizing Official, and accompanying award package. The CD-450 award cover page is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The CD-450 (including associated terms it incorporates by reference) signed by the NOAA Grants Officer is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

The award will ordinarily be issued electronically via an email from NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online, at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with this system. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification from the NOAA program office indicating that their proposals were not recommended for funding.

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 NOAA 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.

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will

apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental or other compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this Announcement and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

2. Uniform Administrative Guidance

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

3. Limitation of Liability

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for any or all qualified projects pursuant to this Announcement or that any proposal will be selected for funding. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the competition described in this notice and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to award funding for specific projects, or obligate any available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, it does so at its own risk of not receiving an award or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs for awards that have not been designated as "research" unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when an award is made. NOAA or the Department of Commerce is not responsible for any proposal preparation costs except as allowed in a Federally-approved indirect cost rate in a project that receives funding. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded to a meritorious

applicant will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Funded awards are subject to enforcement and termination provisions under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342.

4. 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.

5. Felony and Tax Certification

If applicable under Pub. L. No. 113-235 (Division B, Section 523, and Division E, Sections 744 and 745) or another appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) will be required to provide certain representations regarding Federal felony and Federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid Federal tax assessments, and delinquent Federal tax returns.

6. Data Sharing

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. For more information, please see the following url: <https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php>

- (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 5, Outreach and Education.
- (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.

7. FOIA

In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, you should mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Reporting

In addition to Evaluation Reporting described in Section IV.B.2.(b)(vii) of this Announcement, financial and performance progress reporting requirements are described in

the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and 2 C.F.R. 200.327-.200.329, referenced above in Sections VI.A. and B. of this Announcement, and further implemented as described below.

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.html>.

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, <http://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. The semi-annual reports must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. A final comprehensive report is due at the end of the project period. 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.

3. Sub-award and Executive Compensation Reporting

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, 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. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. Part 170, currently available at <http://go.usa.gov/cZe5m>.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Pacific Northwest B-WET website at: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/bwet/welcome.html>

Contacts:

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VIII. Other Information

None.