

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: 2015 Pacific Northwest Bay-Watershed Education and Training

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NMS-2015-2004225

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

Dates: Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific time on November 21, 2014. 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.

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. For purposes of this solicitation, the "Pacific Northwest" includes the states of Oregon and Washington with particular emphasis on coastal communities.

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 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 or Teachers;
- (4) Smaller, Community-Based Organizations.

1. Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for Students -- The NOAA PNW B-WET Program seeks proposals for projects that provide opportunities for students to participate in a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience. 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.

Proposals submitted under this area should address the specific elements and types of activities that define a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (see also the definition provided at <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet.html>):

* 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 - a preparation phase; an action phase; and 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 one or more 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).

* 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 the classroom teacher's strengths and augment the array of resources for the 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 programs, please visit http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html)

Additionally, NOAA PNW B-WET Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences should:

* 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 (http://www.education.noaa.gov/noaa_educ.html) and 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.

2. Professional Development for Teachers related to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences -- The NOAA PNW 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.

Proposals submitted under this area 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 a meaningful watershed educational experience and provide the resources and necessary technical support needed to implement an experience in their classroom.

3. Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences focused on Ocean Acidification for Students or Teachers-- 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 and teachers about ocean education is a main goal of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Therefore, the California B-WET Program seeks projects that encompass the components of MWEEs for students or teachers but are focused on ocean acidification.

Projects focused on this priority area must meet the criteria as set forth in Priority Area 1 or 2 and should be aligned with the newly released 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 should 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);
- b. Professional development system coordinated across existing providers;
- c. Public student congresses to showcase learning and innovation;
- d. Development of Ocean Acidification Literacy Scale as it relates to the Ocean Literacy Principles.

4. Smaller, Community-Based Organizations -- For PNW B-WET FY 2014, special emphasis will be placed on funding smaller community-based organizations that work at a local level to provide Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences. Specific examples of such organizations include watershed councils, fisheries enhancement groups, marine resource committees, nearshore action teams and Indian tribal governments, as well as organizations who serve them.

C. Program Authority

Authority for this program is provided by the following: 33 USC 893a, as amended by the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Reauthorization Act of 2010 ("America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010"), Pub. L. 111-358, title III, § 302.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

It is anticipated that up to approximately \$400,000 will be available in FY2015 for all Pacific Northwest projects. NOAA PNW B-WET anticipates making approximately six new awards during FY 2015. PNW B-WET will consider only projects with a one year duration.

The total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA shall not exceed \$60,000. The minimum Federal amount that must be requested from NOAA is \$25,000. Applications requesting Federal support from NOAA of less than \$25,000 total or more than \$60,000 will not be considered for funding.

Proposals may be considered eligible for renewal beyond the first project period. However, funds will be made available for only a 12-month award period and any renewal of the award period will depend on submission of a successful proposal subject to merit reviews, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding to renew the award. No assurance for funding renewal exists; projects being considered for renewal will be scored according to the same criteria as projects competing for initial funding. 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, renewed projects should include the accomplishments to date on the previous year's grant in their subsequent grant submissions. Applicants may apply 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. If available funding is less than expected, there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date shall not begin before August 1, 2015. Applications must cover a project period of 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. 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.

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

None.

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 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.

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 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:

i. Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424.

ii. Budget Information , Non-construction Programs: SF-424A.

iii. Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B

iv. Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters:
Drug Free Workplace Environment: CD-511

Additionally, the following Department of Commerce forms may be required:

v. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)

2. Proposals

Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NOAA as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

i. Required elements for all submissions-

(1) Components of the proposal outlined in Section IV. A. 2.i.i.b. (a-d) should be submitted as a single PDF document and uploaded into the Grants On Line system as a single PDF document.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) 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).

ii. Proposal Format:

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

(a) 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 (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 continuation beyond the first year.

* Summary of work to be performed. Succinctly describe the project and include number of teachers and/or students to be reached. This will be used as a project summary in funding reports for NOAA B-WET.

* List primary objectives

* List primary project partner(s)

* Budget Information:

- Total Federal funding requested this fiscal year.

- Cost-sharing to be provided from non-Federal sources, if any. Specify whether contributions are project-related cash or in-kind.

- Total project cost this fiscal year.

- Cost per student and/or teacher.

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

* Project Design: 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 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. 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: Give a precise location of the project and the area(s) that will be served.

* 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 C.V for each individual that is participating significantly in the project is required.

* 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. 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. NOAA entities include programs, offices, and organizations, such as the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Sea Grant College Program, National Weather Service Weather Forecast Offices, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Cooperative Institutes, and Regional Associations of the Integrated Ocean Observing System. Letters of support from each partner that is making a significant contribution to the project are required with the application package (see "Supporting documentation" below).

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

* 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.

* 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. Although a range of budgets for project evaluations will be accepted, it is not unreasonable for 10 percent of the budget to be allotted to a comprehensive evaluation of the project. Proposals should include a logic model that identifies project inputs, outputs and outcomes and may be included as an appendix and not part of the 12 page limit for the project description. For detailed information on how to

create an evaluation plan, please use the California 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).

* Benefits or results expected: Identify and document the results or outcomes to be derived from the proposed activities 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.

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.

(c) Budget Justification (not included in the page limit):

The budget justification 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 from sources other than NOAA. 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.

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>

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 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. 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.

- * 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.

(d) Supporting documentation: 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 (limited to five pages);

* Evaluation tools and/or logic model (limited to five pages);

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. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific time on November 21, 2014. 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. 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.

Applications that are late or are received by fax or email will be deemed to not fulfill minimum requirements and will not be considered for review. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by an automated receipt of the date and time of submission. Hard copy applications will be hand stamped with time and date when received at the office of NOAA Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, ATTN: Seaberry Nachbar, 99 Pacific Street, Bldg 455A, Monterey, CA 93940.

D. Intergovernmental Review

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

E. Funding Restrictions

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. 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. Proposals to this competition that limit indirect costs to no more than 25% of direct costs will likely score higher on evaluation criterion.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. 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.

* Do not wait until the application deadline 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.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (30 points) -- This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

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.

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.

4. Project costs (20 points) -- This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Proposals that limit indirect costs to no more than 25% of direct costs will receive additional points in this criteria.

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.

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. Reviewers serving on these 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. New proposals and proposals considered for continuation will be scored using the same criteria as outlined above, but continuation proposals will not be ranked with the new proposals and given priority over new proposals.

The panel will convene to review the ranking and comments and discuss the proposals as a group. Continuation proposals will be considered for continuation based on the comments and feedback from the panel meeting and will independently recommended with either a

yes- continue, or a no- do not continue/fund. Continuation proposals will be given preference over new proposals.

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 proposals will occur during the winter of 2014 and early 2015, and funding is expected to begin August of 2015. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to August 1, 2015.

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. This notification will be sent by e-mail from Grants Online to the institution's Authorizing Official. The official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

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. 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. 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 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.

6. On December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Guidance) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards>), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Once adopted, the OMB Uniform Guidance will supersede DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. The DOC expects to adopt the OMB Uniform Guidance by December 26, 2014, meaning that the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made after December 26, 2014. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with the OMB Uniform Guidance. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar/>."

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.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, <https://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.

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

None.