

**NWX-DOC/NOAA/CONFERENCING (US)**

**Moderator: Carrie McDougall**  
**January 5, 2016**  
**2:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by.

At this time all participants are in a listen only mode until the question and answer session of today's call. At that time if you'd like to ask a question please press star 1.

Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, please disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the meeting over to Ms. Carrie McDougall. You may begin. Thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Thank you. Well welcome to the January 5, 2016 informational teleconference for NOAA's 2016 Environmental Literacy Grants Program.

Happy New Year to you all and I hope you thoroughly enjoyed listening to that hold music while we waited for a few more people to join. Sorry about that.

As you heard I'm Carrie McDougall. I'm one of the Federal Program Officers for this opportunity. And I'm going to hand it over to my colleague.

Sarah Schoedinger: Hi. This is Sara Schoedinger. I work with Carrie in managing the Environmental Literacy Grants Opportunity as well.

Carrie McDougall: So the two of us will be leading the teleconference today. And other members of our team who you may be hearing from later on are John McLaughlin and Christopher Nelson. They're both on the line right now too.

This teleconference is being transcribed as you heard from the Operator. And we will post the transcription of this particular teleconference to our Frequently Asked Questions or FAQ web site next Tuesday, January 12, 2016. So if there's anything you want to look back and check on something you heard, you will be able to do that as of - about a week from now.

So what we'll be doing today is beginning with an overview of the grant opportunity that we're offering this year. And then at the end of the call we'll be taking your questions.

The first part of the overview will take about an hour. It'll be a pretty detailed walkthrough of the funding announcement.

And then as the Operator indicated you are currently muted for the first part of the teleconference. And then once we complete the overview of the funding opportunity you will be able to put yourself into a queue. And at that point when the Operator says your name you will be unmuted and you'll be able to ask one or more questions to us.

So jot down any questions that occur to you as we're going over the funding opportunity and you will have at least an hour to ask questions at the end of this call so hopefully that format works for you.

So this is the second funding opportunity that we have offered focused on the broad topic of education and community resilience. And we want to make sure that you have the correct funding opportunity in front of you which is the primary document we will be reviewing today. The one that you want to have in front of you is the 2016 Version. It's called Strengthening the Public and/or K-12 Students' Environmental Literacy Community Resilience.

And the funding opportunity number which you find on the second page of the document is NOAA-SEC-OED-2016-2004737.

So if that 2016 number isn't appearing in the funding opportunity number you may have the wrong version and that's a problem. You want to make sure you get the 2016 Version.

And you can get that version by going into grants.gov and searching environmental literacy and then it should pop up. But just make sure you're getting that 2016 Version from grants.gov. Okay.

Once you make sure you have the right version in front of you that's what we're going to be reviewing today.

The other thing I want to note is that grants.gov which is the place you'll not only download the funding opportunity but also upload your application and submit it to us, they have a handy feature on their site where you can sign up for email updates related to that particular opportunity. We recommend you do that if you haven't done so already. If we do make any revisions to the funding opportunity, you will receive an email on that placed in grants.gov indicating that revision has been made. So please sign up for email alerts from grants.gov.

All right so we're going to dive into the funding opportunity now. So I'm going to be first walking you through the first few pages of it. And then I will hand it over to Sarah who will walk you through the next section.

So and sorry about that beeping, that's my phone.

So the first page of the funding opportunity is the Table of Contents which hopefully will help get you oriented with the various sections of the funding opportunity.

It is a lengthy document. The whole thing is 34 pages of some fairly dense text, some typical government bureaucracy. But it's a very important document and you need to make sure you read it thoroughly. We cannot stress that enough. You really need to read the entire Funding Opportunity Announcement to fully understand what we're seeking and the requirements for submitting an application.

Okay. So I'm going to move onto Page 2 of the announcement of federal funding opportunity. The first few pages, Pages 2, 3 and 4 are like the abstract for the entire document or the summary for the entire document so all of the text that is on Pages 2, 3 and 4 is also repeated later on in the full document.

So I'm going to skip the summary portion of the announcement now and go straight into the heart of the document which begins on Page 5. So Page 5 you have the first section funding opportunity description, the program objective and then you have the overview.

So the overview talks about the overall program which is NOAA's Environmental Literacy Grants Program. And the goal of our program, the purpose of our program, that purpose is to support projects that inform, educate and inspire a diverse pool of educators, students and the public to use earth system science toward both improving ocean and coastal stewardship and increasing safety and resilience to environmental hazards.

And we referenced NOAA's relatively new strategic education plan. And that's an important guiding document for us and we're hoping for you and your work with NOAA through this grants program.

So these grants support formal and informal education activities at all geographic scales, local, regional and national level. And they all must address NOAA's mission of science, service and stewardship.

And then the paragraph goes on to talk about how NOAA's mission is directed toward a vision of a future where communities and their ecosystems are healthy and resilient in the face of sudden or prolonged change. This is bringing in this idea of resilience which is sort of the core focus of this particular funding opportunity.

So I'm not going to read you the whole rest of that paragraph. But this sets the stage for the types of projects we're interested in supporting this year.

The second paragraph at the bottom part of the page talks about the need for having resilient communities. And cites some very important recent reports that we strongly recommend you familiarize yourself with if you aren't already particularly the National Climate Assessment which is referenced in the middle of that paragraph.

At the - I'm moving onto Page 6. It's - I'm still on the second paragraph that has started on the previous page. Strengthening connections between community

resilience initiatives and education efforts is key to ensuring that local communities make informed decisions to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from significant environmental hazards and stresses with minimum damage to social wellbeing, economy and the environment. Again you can see the hallmark of the types of projects that we're hoping to fund in that sentence.

The very last sentence in that paragraph, building these connections will be the emphasis of the Environmental Literacy Grants for the next several years. So this is putting interested folks on notice that we are planning to have this focus on resilience in the coming years.

However, we do not plan at this point in time to issue another solicitation in 2017. So if you're thinking about a project at this point you might want to go ahead and submit it to this competition as we probably will not issue another solicitation in 2017 and rather we will take the highest ranked applications from this particular competition and use both 2016 and 2017 funding to fund as many applications as we possibly can.

So please be aware that we do plan to skip next year and to offer another competition starting again in 2018 so make note of that in your plans.

So the goal of this federal funding opportunity is to strengthen the public and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision making necessary for community resilience to extreme weather events and other environmental hazards. That's a - it's an important sentence. You want to make sure your project fits within the goal of this funding opportunity. If your project does not work toward that goal, then this probably isn't a good funding opportunity for you to submit your application.

On Page 6 still, I'm on the Section 2, Description of Project Activities. This is the most important paragraph I would say in this funding opportunity. This really describes the kinds of projects that we are seeking to fund with this solicitation.

So I'm going to take a little bit of time to unpack some of the sentences in this paragraph just because it is such an essential paragraph and I want to make sure you understand what we're getting at with these words.

Projects should build the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness and an understanding of earth systems and the threats and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location. So this is very community focused.

In order for communities to become more resilient their members must have the ability to reason about the ways that human and natural systems function and interact, to understand the scientific process and uncertainty, to reason about the ways that people and places are connected to each other across time and space and to weigh the potential impacts of their decisions systematically.

So what you might be gaining from that sentence is that we're interested in projects that are going to be drawing on the disciplines of geography, social science,

ecological and physical sciences, engineering and economics so we're really seeking fairly holistic projects here. A little bit different from what we've funded in the past.

Projects will be firmly based on the established scientific evidence about current and future natural hazards and stresses facing communities and consider socioeconomic and ecological factors. Again seeing that balance of we want to hear - we want to look at projects that are considering the scientific predictions that - of change that are predicted to occur in a particular location and balance that with socio and economic considerations. So we're really looking for projects that are taking both into consideration.

Projects should also one, leverage and incorporate relevant state and local hazard mitigation and/or adaptation plans. And two, collaborate with institutions that are involved in efforts to develop or implement those plans.

So this sentence is new if you read last year's funding opportunity. This is a new element. We have strengthened the language around the incorporation of these hazard mitigation plans.

So we really expect applicants to do some homework here and to look at what community are they going to be working in, does that community already have a plan either at the local, city, county or state level. And how can that plan potentially be incorporated into the education project.

And we expect you to address that and describe that in your project description.

Projects may focus on a single type of environmental hazard or a range of hazards that may impact the community or communities.

And what we mean by that, this is getting to the scale of your project. And what that sentence means is that there's a couple of different scales that might be appropriate. It's up to you to describe the need and how you selected the scale of your project.

But you could for example have a project that's focused on let's just say St. Louis and flooding and heatwaves. So you would have one location with two particular threats and vulnerabilities that that place is currently facing at least one of them. Or you could choose a variety of communities in the Midwest and how they might be dealing with flooding. So that would be a single threat across multiple communities.

So you - we're not specifying a scale. But you should in your project and you should explain the rationale for the selection of the scale of your project.

NOAA will consider funding a wide range of project types but all projects must actively engage participants in learning and addressing real world issues.

This actively engaged phrase is a really critical phrase. And we want to make sure that you understand what we mean by that. We understand that it's a somewhat vague statement. So we've attempted to provide a bit of description on Pages 16 and 17 in the Description of Proposed Activities Section.

But I'll just give you a sense of what we're getting at here. What we mean is that we'd like to see the target audience be involved in activities such as interactive discussions, deliberations, investigations about a particular issue or maybe they participate in a simulation where different scenarios or solutions are explored. Maybe they're conducting citizen science. This would be as opposed to watching a movie about resilience where the information is really passive. It's one way the information is being conveyed to the target audience but the target audience is not necessarily actively engaged following the receiving of that information.

So we're really expecting to see active engagement as a centerpiece approach to your project. So make sure you understand what we mean by that and that you're doing something along those lines.

Back to Page 6, in addition projects must utilize NOAA's vast scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. So you'll notice that's a must so that means it's a requirement.

In order to facilitate the use of NOAA's assets projects are strongly encouraged to partner with relevant NOAA entities, offices, programs, etcetera, and/or NOAA employees and affiliates. NOAA's Education web site and an additional list of relevant assets are provided with URLs in the text here. So we hope these assets and these web sites will help you get connected to NOAA and find assets that might be related to your project.

And just to be clear, all projects must utilize at least one NOAA asset. And you should spend a bit of time describing which asset and why it's appropriate for your project. You do not necessarily have to have a NOAA partner. But in some cases we've found that NOAA partnership tends to strengthen projects, although again it is not a required component.

So moving onto Page 7, project topics must relate to NOAA's mission and at least one of the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather and climate sciences and stewardship and should focus on one or more of the NOAA's goals in the next generation strategic plan which focuses on healthy oceans, weather ready nation, climate adaptation and mitigation and resilient coastal communities and economies.

Projects must be implemented within the United States and its territories. So we're really not taking projects that have impacts outside of the United States.

The projects may be implemented on local or regional scales. And the project description should have - should include a justification of the proposed geographic scale of a project and the discussion of the project components that might be applicable to projects in other places.

So for example if you have a project that's operating on a very small scale in one particular community, we are asking that you identify either an approach or a product or some component of that project that you believe may be applicable to other places and you should state why you think it might be applicable.

Applications that propose the expansion or enhancement of a previously funded project that meets the requirements of this funding opportunity are eligible. However, applicants must explicitly demonstrate the significant accomplishments of the previous award and how the proposed project will significantly improve and/or build on the previous award.

All projects should consider engaging with local community foundations on resilience projects. And we have a web site in here to help you find community foundations. Community foundations are an emerging player in the realm of resilience. Increasingly not only are they providing funding to support communities to become more resilient. But they can also serve as important conveners for diverse stakeholder groups.

So you should really think about engaging with one or more local community foundations that might be appropriate to your project.

NOAA offers other funding opportunities for resilience projects. There are two in particular that are very similar to this one. One is called the Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants. And you can see the URL for that program here in the funding announcement. And the other is the Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program.

Both of these you'll notice are coastal community focused. That is different from our opportunity, the Environmental Literacy Grants Opportunity which is not exclusively coastal community focused. It is - we are focusing on all communities. But these other two NOAA Grants are focused on coastal communities only.

So you might want to take a look at those two web sites for these other programs and if your project may fit better with one - programs you might want to consider submitting your application to one of those two programs rather than this one.

Another education program that is in the NOAA Office of Education and provides grant support is called the Bay Watershed Education and Training Program or BWET. That project funds hands on experiential education watershed-based for K-12 students and teachers typically on slightly smaller scales than the Environmental Literacy Grants Programs. It operates in regions that are along the coast in the United States.

If you think your project might be more appropriate for that funding opportunity take a look at the BWET Program and see if it might be a better fit for your program. And you can find the link to NOAA's BWET Program if you go to the NOAA Office of Education web page and you'll see BWET prominently displayed there.

So I'm still on Page 7, target audiences. Now target audiences for this funding opportunity are the broader public, K-12 students and they also include informal educators including interpreters and docents and formal educators, pre or in-service teachers including school administrators.

Higher education students and professionals working in the area of community resilience are not a target audience for this funding opportunity.

So we've gotten a lot of questions about the professionals working in the area of community resilience. And we recognize this is an area we need to improve the language on in future announcements and we will work to do that.

But what we're meaning is that we're really seeking the target audience to have people who are serving in their public capacities, not in a decision maker capacity professionally.

So these projects are meant to focus on K-12 students, teachers and people who are serving in their citizen capacity rather than their professional capacity.

And you can feel free to ask additional questions about that when we get to the Q&A.

Projects focused on engaging public audiences should involve individuals who represent multiple sectors of society. So again we'd like to see diverse representation in terms of sectors of society.

There's interest in projects that reach groups from underserved communities which are often the most vulnerable to the risk associated with extreme weather events and environmental change.

I'm on Page 8, project evaluation. One of the hallmarks of Environmental Literacy Grants is we do place quite a lot of emphasis on robust project evaluation. We expect you to have a very well developed description of how you will evaluate your project and we expect to see related budgets for to support that type of evaluation.

So we - the evaluation plan should include measurements of the project's progress toward meeting the project goals and objectives as well as the goal of the funding opportunity. We expect to see plans describe for formative and summative project evaluation and that those plans should be based on best practices for evaluating the type of project.

These descriptions of the evaluations should be included both in the project description as well as the budget section of your application. And the project evaluation should include assessment of changes in the target audience's attitudes, knowledge, skills and/or behaviors as a result of the activities undertaken.

The impact of the proposed project on the target audience must be measurable during the award period. And particularly when dealing with vulnerable populations the evaluation should reflect practices of cultural competence. And we've provided a URL if you're not familiar with what that means.

Essential impacts of the project beyond the award period should also be described. And during the award period we expect you to report on both outputs and outcomes to us.

Projects should be based on an existing frontend evaluation or needs assessment. And there should be a description of that needs assessment in the project description.

So when you're describing your project to us and the rationale we expect you to tell us how you know - how you have come to this approach. How do you know that this approach is needed? How do you know this project is needed by your target audience? And how do you know that the approach is sound?

Applicants are also encouraged to provide a logic model or theory of change for their proposed project. Project evaluation should be handled by an external professional evaluator or internal staff who have significant experience with each type of evaluation and are not otherwise substantively involved with the project.

Applicants should include funding for project evaluation in their budgets. It's - we're not going to tell you a specific number but it is not uncommon to see at least 10% to 20% of the budget devoted to the evaluation portion.

To inform - to further inform the broad fields of K-12 and informal science education about what was learned from the project applicants are encouraged to develop appropriate project dissemination plans or strategies. These may include engaging your peers in active discussion of relevant best practices. This may occur through attending professional meetings or other.

We also expect you to provide your Summative Project Evaluation Report to us and potentially also if appropriate to post it in [www.informalscience.org](http://www.informalscience.org) so that others in the field can learn about it.

Okay I'm on Page 9 at the very top, award dates and mission goal. NOAA anticipates that awards funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will be made by September 30, 2016. And that the projects under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than October 1, 2016.

Note as I said in the beginning of the call we may have some applications that we hold over for reconsideration with 2017 funding. For those applications that are held over they will obviously have a later start date.

And we will ask the applicants to revise their start dates if they're selected for funding next year.

This funding opportunity meets NOAA four mission goals, climate, adaptation and mitigation, weather ready nation, healthy oceans and resilient coastal communities and economies.

Then we have a Definition Section which I'm not going to read but please recognize that there's certain terms in here in that we may be using a little differently than you do. So you might want to read through and just make sure you're understanding what we mean when we say a particular word or term.

And then on Page 10 the definitions continue and then there's a section on references. These references, it's a pretty short list. But we strongly recommend you familiarize yourself with these reports if you're not already.

I'm on Page 11, program priorities. There are no other program priorities. And then see program authority, the authority for this program is provided by the America COMPETES Act. And we have a reference to that authority there.

And I'm going to now turn it over to Sarah.

Sarah Schoedinger: All right, thank you very much Carrie. All right, so we're going to move onto the Section 2 on award information and funding availability so please join me on the top of Page 12 of our Funding Opportunity Announcement.

In this funding opportunity we anticipate the availability where we actually for this year we know we have the availability of approximately \$2 million for total federal financial assistance.

And as Carrie has indicated a couple times we will, you know, keep an eye out on what we'll have available in 2017 for additional support for applications that would come in through this year's funding opportunity.

We do anticipate and hope to be able to fund approximately four to eight projects coming out of the Merit Review Process. And we will hold additional applications for funding in 2017. These applications must be between two to five years in duration and have total federal requests between \$250,000 and \$500,000 for all years of the project. Those are minimum requirements so it's important to pay attention to that.

We anticipate that we will be making awards. They will - we will announce awards by the end of our fiscal year this year for the awards that are being made this year.

And that those awards would then not have a start date earlier than 1 October, 2015. In reality we would probably - you would find out whether your award is being made much before that but we give ourselves that grace period because that is the end of the fiscal year and that is our hard deadline for obligation of funds.

So any projects that come in that have a funding request less than \$250,000 or more than \$500,000 for the total federal requests for all years of the project including your direct and indirect costs will not go to review.

One other thing that it's important to note is and I'll reiterate this when we get to the section on your actual content of your application and the budget, the requests that you make to us should not include support for the NOAA partners in the project. This means the actual budget forms that you send to us, your federal funding request should not include any funding for the NOAA partner. That is addressed in a separate section of your application which I'll go over when we get to that section of the document.

All right, so if you will continue on with me to the top of Page 13, I'm going to - I've mentioned you need to have a project award period between two to five years. Again this is a minimum requirement. If we receive an application that comes in with an award or a program - a period of performance of less than two years or more than five years, it will not go to review.

And please don't ask for start dates before 1 October because we would ask you to adjust it anyway if you came in even before that.

In this funding opportunity we will only be funding cooperative agreement. So we will not have grants. And the reason that we use the cooperative agreement instead of a grant is because there - we anticipate that there will always be significant NOAA involvement in the project because we are asking you to incorporate those NOAA assets.

And even though you're not required, it's not a minimum requirement to have a NOAA partner on the project, as Carrie indicated in her earlier remarks it - we've found over the years that it is incredibly helpful to the recipient to have that NOAA partner in order to really be able to make the most of those assets that you're incorporating into your program.

Okay, so now I'm moving onto the eligibility information. So there's a pretty wide range of applicants who are eligible to apply, higher education institutions, other nonprofits, informal education institutions such as museums, zoos and aquarium. We also allow applications from K-12 public and independent schools and school systems and states, local and Indian Tribal Governments may also apply.

However there - we do not allow applications from for profit organizations, foreign institutions or individual. So in those three categories you're not eligible to apply. However, you may serve as project partners. You may receive funding through a sub-award from the primary recipient. You just can't be the primary recipient of the fund. Your institution and an individual cannot be the primary recipient of the fund.

Additionally, we strongly encourage that there is only one PI from an institution. Now that doesn't mean that there's only one application from an institution. But if you - we don't want to see the same PI on multiple applications. That doesn't mean that, you know, John Doe can't serve on application X and application Y. But John Doe should only be the PI on one of those two applications. And he can serve, you know, in some other capacity but not as the PI.

I'm going to move onto, there is no cost share matching requirement so please join me on the top of Page 14.

And now we're getting into some of the nitty gritty that is not so interesting but very important to ensuring a smooth submission process of your application.

So as Carrie indicated earlier, all application packages come through grants.gov. So that place where you went to download the Funding Opportunity Announcement,

that's also the place to download a copy of the application package. And that is the place where you would be submitting your application package before our deadline.

However, there are a couple other things to be aware of that can either throw off your application submission or ensure that it comes through smoothly. And one of those is ensuring that your institution and as the person applying you've got the credentials set up within the System for Award Management.

This used to be called the Central Contractor Registration for those of you who know the nitty gritty details. Now it's called the System for Award Management. You must have a SAM User Account or you need to renew or update your registration if you haven't used it in a while to ensure that your submission through grants.gov is possible.

And this process of either creating or not - and possibly even renewing your SAM User Account doesn't happen instantaneously because they have to go and check the credentials that you're submitting.

So it can take several days and even up to several weeks to establish these accounts. So if you don't already have one of these accounts or you haven't submitted an application through grants.gov, you haven't checked your SAM credentials recently, do so immediately. Do it this week if you're even thinking about applying. Because I hate getting those phone calls and I know all of my other colleagues who are sitting on the call do too from somebody panicked because they thought their credentials were fine and then at the last minute they're trying to submit and they don't work.

And there's really nothing we can do at that point to help you. And we don't accept paper applications and we don't accept emailed application.

I think that's all I'm going to say there. Other than to just point out that in the next paragraph down, we provide you with access to Customer Support for grants.gov. This is a great place to go if you need to troubleshoot either your application process or even getting registered.

And they also - in the section that says Please Note about three-quarters of the way down the page, that is an FAQ page created by grants.gov. And that FAQ page can help you getting registered. Making sure that your browser is compatible with the application package. That can also be something that can cause a glitch in submission. And just making sure that you dotted all the I's and crossed all the T's in terms of the mechanics of your submission so that it goes as smoothly as possible.

The one final thing I'll say before I move onto the next section is those of us who work in the Office of Education do not manage the grants.gov site. We have actually no interaction with it other than making sure that our content is posted correctly on it.

So we can't help you troubleshoot any issues you're having with grants.gov. That needs to happen through their Customer Support desk. So make sure you know that number and that email and make sure, you know, whoever is doing the application

submission for you on your team, they're taking a look at those applicant FAQ pages on grants.gov well ahead of time.

In addition to the FAQ page, so now I'm moving down to the bottom of Page 13 on content and form of application. We have our own FAQ page. And that FAQ page provides guidance and templates and other information that should be helpful to you in preparing your application.

So now what I'm going to focus on are the content and form of your application and the preparation involved in that. One other thing I'll make a note of particularly for those of you who may be familiar with past competitions we have run in the last few years, this year we will not be considering or we won't handle collaborative application.

So we're only looking to receive applications from a single institution and that institution may have multiple sub-awards for their partners. But we're not going to have multiple institutions submitting parallel applications to work on a project together.

So that's a change that's different from the last couple times we've run our competition.

Okay. So now I'm at the top of Page 15 on format requirements. So just pay attention to this. I'm not going to read it to you. But this is one of those sections where you do need to pay attention to these details because this is where we're starting to get into where it says requirements, they're requirements. That means these are things that could bounce your application out of the Merit Review (Pool). And I would hate to see that happen.

One piece of information I would like to note because it is different from last year. We had a number of issues with people sending us scanned documents. The only documents that should be scanned that you're submitting to us are letters of commitment because we know you have to get them on letterhead with their signature and all that.

Everything else, if there's a form you're filling out in grants.gov or it's a template that you're able to fill out dynamically and save and upload or it's, you know, a Word document or something else that you're attaching. So they should all be electronic and there shouldn't be any - I shouldn't be getting pictures of people's applications coming through. I hope that's clear.

And the reason for this is because we really want to have searchable documents for ourselves and for the people who are going to be reviewing these applications.

Okay. So now I'm moving onto content requirements in the middle of Page 15. So in this section again there - these are a number of required elements. Please pay attention to these as you are developing your application. One of the things that may help you to ensure that you are covering all the bases in your application is to use an

application checklist either one of your own creation or one that we have provided on our template page.

And at the end of that particularly second paragraph there, just above where it says required forms there's a URL there that links you directly to the page for all of our application templates. So that has the checklist to ensure that you submit a full application. Those checklists not only tell you what you need to upload but also where it's recommended you attach it in grants.gov so I know that's often a question we get from people. So there's a lot of good guidance in these templates.

And while you're not required to use them it's strongly encouraged because they've been developed over time to ease the process for all of you and for us on the other side receiving your application.

So a few things to note, I'm not going to call it out in each section. But please pay attention to page limit. There are some sections of your application that have page limits and others that do not. So please pay attention to that. Because page limits are a minimum requirement just like the size of type, page and all of that.

Obviously the required forms, they're required. I think the only one that you will need to determine if it's applicable is the SFLL. All of these will be provided in grants.gov for you to fill out. And if you don't fill them out it'll probably give you an error, well it will give you an error message if you don't have anything submitted.

Although you can make errors in how you fill out your SF-424A. That won't necessarily bounce your application but may leave us scratching our head. So one of the other templates that we have provided to you is actually not a template but more of a sample of a completed SF-424 and 424A so that you know how the information needs to be broken down on your budget information. That tends to be the thing that is the most confusing for people.

Okay. So now I'm on the title page. Please you - a title page is a required element. And this was a problem for a number of applicants last year. We also provide a template for the title page. You do not have to use the template.

But if you don't use the template then all of this information, I'm now at the top of Page 15, that you see with little I through little VI, okay, those all have to be included on your title page for it to be considered complete. That's why we offer templates because it helps to ensure that you get us the information we expect to see and that you have that title page.

So either way we need a title page and we need the information that we're requesting there. That's a minimum requirement.

We need a - moving on down we need the 15-page project description. Again this is one of these areas where there's page limits. There's also, you know, a checklist to help you understand the sections of your project description and what we're looking for and how we're looking for it. So I suggest you make use of those.

The project description should and I'm not going to read each one of these paragraphs starting here, but the project description is your place to tell us about your project. I think that's fairly self-explanatory.

But, you know, what are the program objectives?

How are they helping to meet our objective and goal for this funding opportunity?

What are the proposed activities?

Who's the target audience and how are you planning to reach out to them?

How are you using those resilience assets that Carrie mentioned in the earlier part of this telecon?

Moving onto the top of Page 17, the project description should also include, you know, that justification that you discussed for your geographic scale and the hazards that or group of hazards that you have chosen to focus on with your project idea.

You should be prepared to discuss the role of your project partners. You would need, this is where you would highlight any partnerships that involve the use of NOAA assets.

And also, you know, just as a side note, I've mentioned letters of commitment, you know, when I was talking about scanned documents. Letters of commitment are outside of the 15-page page limit for the project description. But they are a very important component because those letters tell us that the partners you're mentioning on the project are committed, that they understand how they're going to be involved, that they're committed to being involved.

So that carries actually a fair amount of weight. It's not a requirement. But it definitely helps. And you'll see that reflected in the evaluation criteria.

And also you will need to cover the description of your qualifications and capability of the personnel involved in the project as well as the institution that will be involved. We expect to see a description of how the project will incorporate NOAA data and data access tools and any other NOAA assets that are going to be part of your project activity.

And then please also plan to discuss whether or not you - there are relevant state or local hazard mitigation plans or adaptation plans for your proposed project area.

And if they exist, how do you plan to leverage them and incorporate them into your proposed project? If they don't exist, you know, have you identified the teams that are in the process of developing them and how do you plan to engage that community of people?

And how overall does your project team plan to collaborate with any institutions that are involved in those efforts to develop or implement such a plan.

And then as Carrie mentioned in the section on evaluation, we do expect to see a pretty cogent description of your evaluation plan. Who will be carrying it out? What do you plan to measure? And then we also expect to see some corresponding budget line item related to those activities.

Okay. I'm moving onto the top of Page 18. Each application will need a work plan or a milestone chart. This is outside of the project description. This is another element but it is a required element.

There is no page limit. We expect to see brief resumes at a minimum for all Principal Investigators and co-Principal Investigators. But ideally we would have resumes for any additional key personnel from the applicant, institution or any of your project partners because this tells us and the reviewer who's working on the project and what their relevant expertise and capacities are for the project.

Moving on down the page, each application should also have a section that focuses on the description of NOAA involved in the project. As I mentioned earlier we only anticipate making cooperative agreements because we do anticipate NOAA involvement.

And as such we need you to describe in a separate section outside of your 15-page project description it is, you know, fully focused on who the NOAA partners are, what their proposed activities and tasks will be, and any budget request that's associated.

Now sometimes NOAA partners are able to provide their participation in an Environmental Literacy Project in kind, right. Its part of their duties and they - it doesn't require any additional fund from us.

But sometimes that's not possible. And so when there is a budget request you would also include that in this section. It should be broken down in the same categories that will be used for your other budget sections of the application file. So following the budget cost categories for the SF-424A.

And so just make it clear sort of that this is an additional cost and please be aware that those costs cannot exceed 10% of the total federal requests that you are making to us for this project.

All right, moving on down, the bottom page, we also require you to provide us with the information on current and pending support. Those of you who are familiar with applying for federal grants are probably already familiar with that. And we do provide a template on - for that information as well.

And now I'm at the top of Page 19. And this is where we start to get into the nitty gritty details about the budget.

So this next section I won't go through - I'll highlight a few things but I just want to say please read this section carefully. We do expect to have both a detailed table and

a narrative in addition to the required SF Form. So the standard forms, 424A and of course the application form, the SF-424 will have the minimal budget information on it.

This section is a way for you to describe both your budget in a year-by-year breakdown as well as the budgets for any of your partners who are going to have sub-awards on your project.

So the categories that you must provide details on are things like personnel salaries and fringe benefits, travel for project partners or participants, any equipment or supplies that may be related, any contractual costs so contractual here would be anything like your sub-award would fall under that category.

And then moving onto the top of Page 20, other costs are things like printing, publications and so forth, and of course indirect costs. There are a number of paragraphs as you can see on this page related to indirect costs because the federal rules regarding indirect costs changed about a year ago.

And so just take a look at that. And be aware of what those terms are. And we do have FAQ information and so forth if you have any questions about that.

So I'm going to move to the top of Page 29, I'm sorry, 21. And just let you know again the evaluation piece of the budget, we do expect to see some portion of your budget allocated toward evaluation. If you're not and you're leveraging funding from some other source for evaluation, people have done that in the past and that's fine. But you've got to make it clear that where those sources of funds and if they're on hand or not.

Let's see. Last thing on the budget, I just want to point out some sources of additional information. So at the - near the top of Page 21, there is a web site provided by the Acquisitions and Grants Office at NOAA and Grants Management Division so that PDF URL is listed right there. And of course we've got some samples and templates on our templates page for you.

You may or may not need to provide a data sharing plan. I'm now at the middle of Page 21. This is if you're collecting data as part of the project evaluation that's not considered environmental data and information.

So take a look at the - this section carefully. If you have any questions and you're not sure, just contact us. And we'll help you think through it.

Additionally, any references cited that you use any of the literature that you reference in your project narrative, you know please make a reference to that. If there are no references cited, please state that.

I'm now at the top of Page 22. So as I mentioned letters of commitment are very important pieces or can be if you've got project partners as we anticipate you will on these proposed projects. So that is another element we expect to see although it's not a required element.

And then the last on there is NEPA. And we determined that the National Environmental Policy Act requirements are not relevant so we're not going to - at this point in time. We may determine later on after we see your application that there's some, you know, we need to make some kind of inquiry about that but we don't want to waste your time with the question there that's probably not going to be needed.

Okay. So moving onto the middle of the page here, as I mentioned at the very beginning of this section I'm covering you do need to be registered in the System for Award Management. And that requires you to provide a Duns Number. You need entity identifier for the system. And so this is actually a federal requirement. We're not just doing it for grins. So make sure you get that taken care of as soon as possible.

Moving on down, submission dates and times. I'm now at the bottom of the page. We are - our application is open until 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on February 8, 2016. The staff in the Office of Education will be available until 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time to answer any questions that you may have.

But all applications must be submitted through grants.gov. And as I mentioned earlier no hard copy, no email applications are accepted. And anything that - I mean we basically - if you don't get it through by that timestamp, it doesn't come through us. So we don't receive an application and there's no workaround. This is a very stringent requirement.

So one thing you may want to try doing if you have not submitted an application through grants.gov before or you haven't done it in a long time is to try submitting something a couple days before the deadline. We can always withdraw the application from our pool to be considered at your request. I can't just go and do it capriciously. But I can withdraw it. If you want to make sure that you're not having any hiccup with the submission.

So please note that when you submit something through grants.gov there are actually two types of confirmations that you receive. The first will be an email confirmation that you've submitted something. And then the second will be that you - there were no errors with the application. And that it has actually been forwarded to NOAA successfully.

The issue can be that the second email can take up to two days to arrive from an application submission especially if it's during a very busy time on grants - through the grants.gov system. So just be aware of that and take that into consideration when you're planning, you know, you're timing for submission.

So I'm now through the top of the first paragraph on Page 23. I'm going to skip the next section. You all can read that on your own.

The next section I really want you to focus on is the evaluation criteria. We have five evaluation criteria that we use for this funding opportunity. Okay. One is on the importance or relevance and applicability of a proposed project to the program goal.

That's 30 points, okay, of a possible 100 points. There's technical and scientific merit which is worth 40 points of your score potentially. The overall qualifications of the applicant is 15 points, total project costs are 10 points and then education and outreach are 5 points.

So that, you know, gives you a very high level view of sort of the relative weight we're giving to each of these major criteria. And then under each of these criteria you really need to look at them because these are the criteria our reviewers will use to evaluate the merit of your proposal that's coming in.

And we have broken down. We have sub-criteria in I think every section of the major criteria. And we have broken the sub-criteria down and give (assigned) points to them. So if you're wondering sort of, you know, what's the relative weight we're giving to certain aspects of our - of your - of the proposal, this is where you can find that information.

So for instance under the first criterion on the importance or relevance of the project to the program goal, you can see that the first sub-criterion on how well the project addresses the mission goal and the goal of this funding opportunity and so forth is allocated 5 points. Okay.

But further down, you know, we have the extent to which the project will involve groups from underserved or at risk communities, that's worth 4 points.

So just take a look within each of these to see how the points break down. And then, you know, as you're developing your proposal continue to look back and see how - what you're proposing matches up to the relative weight that we've given for these criteria.

So like I said, I'm not going to read each of these criteria. You should do that on your own.

So now we're going to move ahead to Page 26. And that's halfway down the page. Section B is the review and selection process.

So I just want to call your attention to the list of items in this first paragraph here. So when we get your application we do an administrative review before these are then assigned to reviewers.

And what we look for are whether you've met all of our minimum requirements. So were you eligible to apply?

Did we get an application on time?

Did we get all parts of the application that we required and were they in the format that we required?

Are you within those parameters for the budget and for the project duration?

Those are the things that we look at. And if you're not meeting any one of those it will bounce your application out. And your application will be disqualified and will not go on for a Merit Review.

So let's talk a little bit about the review process. We've changed this up a little bit from last year so any of you who may have applied last year. We got a tiered system. Now we're anticipating a very high number of applications again.

But on the very slim chance that we got a low number of applications, i.e. 40 or fewer, then we would just once we passed minimum requirements we would send them on and just conduct a panel review with a group of reviewers who have the relevant expertise. They're independent. They don't have conflicts of interest with any of the applications and so forth.

However, because we anticipate a very large number of applications coming in, there will be a two-step process most likely. So any applications that meet the eligibility minimum requirement will first go through a mail review. Okay. And that mail review will involve a minimum of three reviewers. And they will provide written comments and they will assign scores based on the evaluation criteria that I just covered in Section 5(a).

And we, the Program Office Staff will use the average score for each application to establish a preliminary rank list. And then we will take a look at that list and look for where there are numerical breaks. And the top number of applications that's closest to the number of 40 will be the number that goes forward to a review panel.

That review panel may consist of - they may have some overlapped membership with the people who were assigned and completed reviews by mail but not 100% overlap most likely.

And that's because we just don't anticipate somebody would be able to provide that amount of help to us because it's a pretty heavy lift.

So we will have another panel again. That panel should have reviewers with relevant expertise and then they will go forward and they will re-review your applications. They will have access to the comments that were provided by the mail reviewers.

And after discussion they will be able to rescore application and provide us with a rank order. That rank order is important because that is the initial basis for our decisions for selection. And we do take into account selection factors.

So as you look further down the page you can see in Section C there we talk about the selection factors that may cause us to select applications out of rank order for funding. And I should say for funding and for consideration of funding in 2017 because that's our plan this year.

So do take a look at those and become familiar with them. Although it won't directly affect your application at this stage and I can understand you'd be more focused on the preparation phase of the process at this point.

So moving on down on Page 28, on anticipated announcements and award date. As we indicated earlier we definitely will make announcements by September 30th. The review of applications will occur between March and June, okay. So we will likely be getting in touch with applications we want to recommend for funding this year, you know, in June, late June sometime.

But our actual final announcements and nothing is decided until our Grants Office approves the final award packages. So we make our recommendations. We work with the selected applicants to make sure their award packages are in the shape they need to be for consideration by our Grants Office.

But then it becomes out of our hands. And if they find something that is a major roadblock to funding then we have - we, you know, we'll have to go back and revisit our choices. We've never actually had that happen. But it could. And so that's just why we buy ourselves some time.

And again project start dates should be 1 October or later.

All right, so let's see. Next section is our award notices. I'm not going to go through this in any great detail. You should to make yourself aware of it however. These are important things just to be aware of. For instance, if you are recommended for funding we are very likely going to come back to you and ask you to modify your budgets, your timeline, things like that in order to prepare that application package for submission to our Grants Management Division.

And of course the Grants Officer or the Grant Specialist who's reviewing your application has the right or the authority to ask you to make additional changes once it's under their review.

The next section at the bottom of Page 29 is a bunch of administrative and policy requirements that we are required to notify you of. Please take a look at them but I don't think you need to stress those as much as some of the other information that's available earlier in the document.

And so if you can please join me at the top of Page 33. This is where we inform you about any reporting we may ask you to do. Progress Reports are required and we are going to be running final comprehensive reports with parts of it that we can share publicly so just be aware of that.

And then the last section and we are almost done is agency contacts. So Carrie introduced all of us at the beginning of the call. The best way to reach us because we are fielding a number of questions and we all have different schedules and may have travel and other things going on is to send it to [oed.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:oed.grants@noaa.gov).

And please also familiarize yourself with our competition web site. Those resilience asset pages that have been mentioned, the FAQ pages that have been mentioned. This address here on the end of this page is our main office web site address. And you can get to the Environmental Literacy Grants Opportunity through that page as well.

I think with that I'm going to stop. And (Lisa), our Operator, if you can now open up the lines for Q&A.

Carrie McDougall: Sorry. Really quickly, how many people do we have on the call right now?

Coordinator: We have 145 participants left.

Carrie McDougall: Thank you very much.

Coordinator: You're welcome. At this time if you would like to ask a question please unmute your line. Press star 1. Record your first and last name when prompted. If you need to withdraw the question because it's already been answered you may press star 2. Once again in order to ask a question please press star 1. Give us a few moments please for any questions to show in queue.

Our first question comes from (Maureen). Your line is open.

(Maureen): Hi. Thank you for the teleconference information. I have a question about NOAA partners.

And that is we've been working with LA, Louisiana Sea Grant. They are one of our partners already for some of our K-12 initiatives.

And the Sea Grant is partner but the collaborator we've been working with is paid through LSU. And so the question is if we wanted to incorporate her time, you know, LSU would like for us to cover her effort on the project.

So would that - would her, you know, budget be included and as a collaborator in a grant or in a separate category for NOAA since LA Sea Grant is part NOAA, part LSU?

Carrie McDougall: You really have the option to handle it either way for...

(Maureen): Okay.

Carrie McDougall: ...there are a couple of entities that are unusual in that and Sea Grant is one of them where they are both. Because they are a federal state partnership they definitely count as the NOAA partner for sure. And, you know, assuming she would be linking you to NOAA assets.

But because they aren't fully NOAA federal they can either be handled in your budget request like any other subcontractor, sub-award or they can be put in the 10% federal share. It's up to you depending on the way your project is structured.

(Maureen): Okay. All right, I think that answers our question. Thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: Next question.

Coordinator: The next question comes from Jane. Your line is open.

(Jane): Hi. I also was looking for further clarification of the kinds of target audiences. We've had an informal partnership with the (legal) municipalities in Wisconsin.

And we were interested in working with them to work with county boards, local governments and local sewage districts participants on various extreme weather things.

And I wondered, you know, does somebody who works for the sewage plant count as a resilience professional. We just weren't quite sure.

Carrie McDougall: I would say yes. As strange as that sounds on the surface. And totally appreciate your question.

We like I said in the call, we recognize this is an area of - an area that needs improvement in our announcement. Basically projects that are working with people who are serving as citizens in their public capacity regardless of what their jobs are 9:00 to 5:00 sort of speak. That's where we're looking to have projects focused.

Projects that are working more with people who are elected officials or decision makers or government officials or serving in some professional capacity, that's really outside of the realm of what we're seeking to fund.

And I'll tell you. One of the reasons that we make that distinction is because those other grant opportunities I mentioned that NOAA offers they tend to focus on those types of target audiences.

(Jane): Okay, all right. So if we wanted to work with, another partner we have is the library association where we do community talks. That would be a more appropriate fit for this kind of grant. Is that...?

Carrie McDougall: Yes.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes.

(Jane): Okay, all right. Thanks. That's very helpful.

Carrie McDougall: And actually before we move onto the next question because I know some people will probably drop off before the very end, I want to strongly recommend that you take a look at the six awards that we issued last year when we ran a very similar competition to this one.

And you can find those awards, you can find the abstracts for those awards by going to NOAA's Office of Education web site. And then there's a Grants Section at the top. You'll see Environmental Literacy Grants under that. And then you want to click

on the Awards tab and on that Awards tab you will find a link to the list of awardees from 2015.

And when you read the abstracts for those six awards, it'll give you a sense of the kinds of projects that we funded last year, the scale, the geographic scale, the scope of activities, the types of partners they're working with.

And I think that'll give you a really good sense of the kind of the projects we're expecting to support in 2016. Okay.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Leslie. Your line is open.

(Leslie): Hi. I'm actually a NOAA Fisheries employee. Potentially working with a local partner on a grant application for this opportunity.

And one of the NOAA assets that we've been talking about focusing on are salmon recovery plans. And the intersection of stewardship and protection of listed resources and resilience and building resilience in local communities from river flooding as the two objectives often intersect.

And since we haven't really talked about the NOAA assets portion all that much since there's so many of them, I just was wondering if you felt like that was a good fit for this opportunity.

Carrie McDougall: I - based on what you described which obviously is limited information that we have, I would say generally yes. Of course depends on your target audience as you've heard us discuss already.

(Leslie): Right.

Carrie McDougall: However, one of the things we do do is we make sure that the projects that we're going to fund through this opportunity do not overlap and could not be supported through those other opportunities I mentioned earlier in the call.

And so there's that fisheries ecosystem resilience opportunity, funding opportunity. And so if that - if the project you're describing could be supported under that funding opportunity we would probably not want to support it through this funding opportunity if that makes any sense.

But so it would have to be...

(Leslie): It does.

Carrie McDougall: ...fully educate.

(Leslie): So that one I saw as more of a hands on kind of improvement of habitat where this one is more of an education opportunity that can integrate both goals.

Carrie McDougall: Okay, yes.

(Leslie): Okay, all right. Okay, great. Thank you.

Carrie McDougall: You're welcome.

Coordinator: Next we have (Susan). Your line is open.

(Susan): Hi. Thank you. I'm sort of new to this grant opportunity. And would like a little bit of a more detailed explanation of what constitutes a NOAA partner. Is that specifically, you know, one of the departments of NOAA or are there other nonprofit organizations that are considered NOAA partners? I'm just - just like a little bit more detail on that please.

John McLaughlin: Yes. This is John. It's a great question and you may want to review our Frequently Asked Questions Section for a little more explanation as well.

Basically on our NOAA assets page we have a list of some NOAA assets as well as potential partners. And you can find people within the NOAA. In your backyard language, you'll find the funding opportunity.

But by NOAA partners we do mean people who are NOAA affiliates, NOAA Staff and also these partner networks. You heard Sea Grant mentioned and there's also the National Estuarine Reserve and there are (unintelligible) as well.

And you'll find a frequently asked question in the FAQ page that talks to that. So really those people are part of the NOAA workforce and are associated networks.

(Susan): Thank you very much.

Coordinator: Next we have Ingrid. Your line is open.

(Ingrid): Thank you. My question is related to the PI and the co-PI. Our Project Coordinator is actually a federal employee. And so would go beyond being just key personnel.

So I'm wondering if that just automatically disqualifies our organization.

Carrie McDougall: That's a good one. So NOAA federal employees cannot serve as PI. So this is not a NOAA federal employee.

(Ingrid): No. It's not.

Carrie McDougall: Okay. I'm just doing a quick search in the funding opportunity so making sure we don't have language. I don't believe we restrict that the PI cannot be a Fed.

John McLaughlin: No.

(Ingrid): And would that include that person's - that person's salary would not be part of the budget request (unintelligible).

John McLaughlin: Actually.

Sarah Schoedinger: So. Okay. I'm confused. So we do - several employees may not serve as PIs or co-PIs.

Carrie McDougall: Okay, that's what I was looking for...

((Crosstalk))

Sarah Schoedinger: No, they may not. And I'm sorry. I actually failed to state that in the discussion when I over that section. But federal employees may not serve as PIs or co-PIs on an application. They...

(Ingrid): Okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: ...can be put as key personnel. So if this person is a Project Coordinator obviously they would need to be involved. But you - I'm assuming you're not at a federal institution because if you were you wouldn't be eligible to apply.

(Ingrid): Okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: As the lead institution is what I'm saying. So that's what I'm trying to get at is we don't - you can - federal institutions can be partners and as you've indicated they're not necessarily - this individual would not receive funds. But one part of NOAA cannot apply to us for (unintelligible) for instance.

(Ingrid): Say that one more time.

Sarah Schoedinger: Another part of NOAA cannot apply to us for funds.

(Ingrid): Right. And also not another federal institution.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes. No. We're not transferring funds that way so.

(Ingrid): Okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: I guess. There are ways people have managed to, you know, take a project (unintelligible), you know, housed at a federal agency, something like that. And partner with another organization.

But that other organization that's not a federal entity manages the project.

((Crosstalk))

(Ingrid): Would have to basically - okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: Manages the grant, you know, and handles all of that piece of it.

(Ingrid): Right. Okay, I see.

Sarah Schoedinger: Okay.

(Ingrid): Okay, thank you.

Sarah Schoedinger: You're welcome.

Coordinator: Next we have Monica. Your like is open.

(Monica): Thank you. You mentioned that projects could be implemented on a local to a regional scale.

And in looking at the six awards that were made last year I don't really see any smaller community-based projects. They all seem larger scale whereas in previous years I have seen smaller community-based projects.

So I wonder if that means that you're looking for larger regional or projects even that are national in scope for this year.

Sarah Schoedinger: So the projects that you saw us funded - that you saw us funding last year, yes. Some of them have - they appear - they have a national distribution. For instance, a project through Califa which works with libraries and all over the U.S.

But they're taking - there is national distribution. But with very locally relevant information.

So I don't know and actually I'm a little surprised by your comment that you thought we had more localized implementation in prior ELG competitions because that is not how we think of it in the office. In fact, we think of the opposite that actually last year and this year we've shifted from more national to regional, to regional to local in its focus. And the focus of the activities. That doesn't mean that it might not be implemented in a number of places.

But it's very linked to the locally relevant issues in this particular case, the threats and vulnerabilities of the community.

Carrie or John I don't know if you want to add anything but.

Carrie McDougall: Well I'll just add that the - there were, you know, two projects we funded last year that I would also describe as semi-national. Califa the library one, and the Arizona State University one.

And both of those are using proven models and approaches that have already been tested on small scales. And then taking them and implementing them nationally.

And that's a hallmark of those two national scale projects. The others are much more localized in their approach. And I would say that they are to some extent experimenting with a local approach or working with new partners they haven't

worked with before. And that's the part that we're funding and we're interested in seeing how that works out.

So if you have a - if you're thinking about a national scale project but your approach or model hasn't really been tested before, I think that would probably be a weaker project for this overall solicitation.

(Monica): We're looking at more of a community-based project because it would not have a national scope. So I think your answer is encouraging. Thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: Good.

Coordinator: Next up is (Margot Planigan). Your line is open.

(Margot): Hello. I have a question about - I have two questions about two sections please.

I was looking at the needs assessment mentioned on Page 8. And it says that has to be an existing funding needs assessment. And I'm wondering what kind of things qualify for that. I'm thinking along the lines of citing local studies or government studies and announcements that drive our response to the needs of the community there.

But any kind of more formal surveying, we would be inclined to put in as part of the, you know, a pre-process in the evaluation. And I'm wondering if there's any guidance or comments back about that.

Carrie McDougall: The needs assessment or frontend evaluation that we reference on Page 8 does not necessarily need to be formal in the sense that it was conducted by an external professional evaluator and/or specifically done on the exact project that you're planning to submit.

And you can use similar types of studies that were done. And describe them as a whole how they describe an overall need. We want to see some sort of rationale for why you're doing this project. Does the need exist for the project? How do you know that need exists for the project?

And it may be that you're going to draw on several different types of studies and reports to describe the rationale for the project. Not necessarily one that's very, very specific and formally conducted.

(Margot): Okay, all right. Thank you. And if I could ask also about the NOAA partner descriptions that are on Page 17 and Page 18. The difference that I'm sensing is the part that's the letter F on Page 18 includes more of the kind of budgetary information.

And on the part on Page 17 seems to be addressing more of the connectivity. I just wanted to think through not repeating myself or would it be appropriate to just cut and paste the same descriptive text in both sections?

((Crosstalk))

Sarah Schoedinger: Go ahead John.

John McLaughlin: I was going to say. So on Page 17, there's the description of how the NOAA Project will incorporate NOAA data, data access tools and other NOAA assets. Is that what you're referring to?

(Margot): No, Z, the partner, project partners here on Page 17, the - it says a description of project partners and then Page 18 F says describe the involvement of NOAA partners.

And so the difference or cut, you know, paste the same information in is my question.

John McLaughlin: Yes. So I would say if they're specifically NOAA partners, the majority of the description should go in Section F, the description of NOAA involvement.

So (unintelligible) about the highlight any partnerships involving the use of NOAA assets. But yes, if the partnership is with a NOAA entity the primary description of it should go in Section F.

(Margot): Okay. Thank you.

Sarah Schoedinger: And I'll just add that we anticipate that you don't. You're not necessarily just going to have NOAA personnel involved as partners. And so this Section Z that you're referring to on Page 17 is a description of all the partners involved in your project, not just the ones involving NOAA assets.

So I just want to make sure not leaving an impression that it's focused on NOAA only.

(Margot): Thank you for that.

Carrie McDougall: And I'm sorry. One other layer, this is complex but is that you may have a non-NOAA partner that's assisting you in utilizing a NOAA asset.

Sarah Schoedinger: That's right, yes.

(Margot): Okay, thank you. Thank you.

Sarah Schoedinger: Okay.

Coordinator: Next we have (Pat). Your line is open.

(Pat): Thank you. My question is about the evaluation. And if our project actually develops tools that will support this resilience and decision making in the community and we've used a valid approach to do that, is it necessary then to get the metric for how many people access the tool or an indicator they have used the tool or do we have to

within the scope of the project actually come up with changes in behavior that are actually resilient (depth) and measure some impact at a whole community level?

Carrie McDougall: Well I mean would say that if you are developing something that you can already document the need for it and you know that it works generally, maybe you're making some modification to it, then you may not have to take it all the way into the final target audience had this changed added to just changed skill.

But if you're developing a brand new tool that hasn't been used before, you don't really know if it's going to work, then we would really expect you to go ahead and test it all the way out to its target audience. And what impact did it have on the target audience.

(Pat): Okay, thank you.

Coordinator: Next we have Beverly. Your line is open.

(Beverly): Yes, hi. I do see on the assets list that Globe Elementary was on your assets list. But I saw things like (ALI) that had to do with atmosphere.

And so even though we've got a disaster here and we're working with lots of different elements Globe Elementary and with (UCAR) we wondered if they're participating with you because we fit some of the other things you were saying about local and regional and being able to use asset tools like the Globe classroom and citizen science with schools that have iPads and new tools.

John McLaughlin: Yes. This is John. Thanks. That's a very good question. And NOAA is a supporting agency for Globe and globe definitely has program goal that match very nicely with our goals here at NOAA Education.

So those materials could certainly very cleanly be integrated into one of these projects and focused to look at resilience issues. Globe (currently) by itself does not count as a NOAA asset. But the materials are definitely are well in line with and very, very potentially appropriate for this funding opportunity.

(Beverly): Likewise on the multiyear part of this because we can't seemingly integrate everybody at once. But there seems to be a similarity with a raise under the oceans for earthquakes working with (risk scope) and working with our flood plain which is flooding today. So we not only have a gas (unintelligible) but with methane but we've got rain and flood plains and (why the LA) River is cemented up that we can work with and the kids can work with the parks and the libraries.

And so my question is can we when we're not in the way of other people's projects talk about the sort of informal science to local assets, to your assets because that would be really important and not using up your time with something that wasn't ready for you yet? And maybe being able to find out who we could partner with, who we'd partner with for years like the county libraries or something along with citizen science and iPads and working with the other partners that exist.

So is there a way on your web site that we can look at past partners and sort of see like is it worth it for us to go ahead or we should just wait till we learn more about all these different people that obviously it takes time to interface with and get commitment with but we've got some really solid, you know, 507 elements (risk pools) potentially is not a bad mix and people that have been here from all over Globe to work with us on the phone, you know, both in Boston and in Colorado?

John McLaughlin: Yes. But - this is John. Based on the previous conversation, I think what you are talking about previous assets. I think you actually may be referring to previously funded groups.

And you can find those from the information Carrie presented earlier within our Office of Education web site if you go to grants, Environmental Literacy Grants. And then awards. You can actually find all the groups of previously funded including a searchable map.

And I would say to regard of - to - with regard to your question of additional local assets, additional assets, I would say that (due to positive) while we are looking for projects to integrate NOAA assets, there can certainly be other local assets that are appropriate for the threat or the community you are working with.

So the combination of locally appropriate assets complementing NOAA assets is certainly worthy structure of a project.

(Beverly): Yes. Because it makes sense that somebody from the municipal department that cleans up the mess, what we call it sanitation here. So we have a watershed part of the city and the county, (and sanitation) part and because we've got dry hill sites and flood, water flooding down them. That it makes sense the cleanup is part of it with these different municipalities that end up under mud.

So okay, I'll go back and look at list and see what I find. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: Next question comes from Rebecca. Your line is open.

(Rebecca): Yes. My question is does NOAA have a tribal liaison or representative or a tribal NOAA partner that we could contact to find to work on a project with?

Carrie McDougall: I don't know the answer to that. I would - we have an intergovernmental affairs person whom we could put you in touch with. Someone who's specific to tribal governments, I'm not sure.

Would you like to be put into contact with our intergovernmental affairs person?

(Rebecca): Yes. Yes, please.

Carrie McDougall: Okay. Why don't you send an email to [oed.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:oed.grants@noaa.gov) and then we will have your email and we can respond.

(Rebecca): Okay. What was that address again, O?

Carrie McDougall: It's the email address that's published in our FFO, oed.grants@noaa.gov.

(Rebecca): Thank you.

Coordinator: Next we have Megan. Your line is open.

(Megan): Hi there. My name is Megan. I'm with the Desert Research Institute in Nevada.

My question is about the extreme events and hazards that we can work with. I'm wondering if wildfire and noxious weeds is relevant here in the Great Basin and the Sierra. Persistent drought and other factors have led to increased wildfire risks as well as - and noxious weeds is part of that cycle. So I'm wondering if you would consider that as relevant to the hazards of the project.

Carrie McDougall: That's a little bit of a tough one. I mean drought is definitely, you know, squarely within NOAA's purview. Wildfires are sort of tangentially part of NOAA's purview in terms of predicting the conditions that make wildfires more likely to spread.

Weeds obviously are not part of NOAA's mission. But sort of ecosystem management in the broader sense is.

So, you know, I think it - you might have to be artful in how you make the connection to how it's related to NOAA's mission. You know, may be dig in on the NOAA strategic plan and read about the different mission areas of NOAA and see if you can relate it very specifically to a particular mission area.

(Megan): Okay.

Sarah Schoedinger: And the other thing that might help you is to really take a look at the NOAA assets that you might be utilizing in this project and think about it in that context. And that also could be potentially a helpful indicator to see what may be relevant to us and what may not.

(Megan): Okay, great. Thank you very much.

Coordinator: Next we have Sarah. Your line is open.

(Sarah): Thank you so much. My question is going back to NOAA partnerships. And I know John addressed this and mentioned the Frequently Asked Questions page.

But my question is, at Discovery Science Cube in Orange County in Los Angeles we already utilize a variety of NOAA assets. For example, we have Science on a Sphere. We are looking to deepen the content because, you know, we have a new (feeder) and all these different programs coming aboard. And so we've been working with National Sanctuaries to get images and new media.

So would it be necessary for this particular RFP to formalize that relationship and get letters of commitment from these various NOAA agencies who's assets we used? I'm

just trying to determine what constitutes a NOAA partnership versus utilizing current NOAA assets.

Carrie McDougall: Well again NOAA partners are not required.

(Sarah): Okay.

Carrie McDougall: For projects to be funded. Use of NOAA assets definitely is required.

So if - and then in terms of, you know, would it be worth formalizing a relationship that you have, I mean if you think that the project you're going to propose will - would be strengthened by having a formalized partnership with one of those NOAA entities or maybe more, then by all means pursue it. But, you know, don't do it if it's not real obviously.

And then the other thing that I'll just caution you given, you know, that I know a little bit more about your program because you have Science on a Sphere is please make sure you're looking carefully at that active engagement language. That's what we caution a lot of particularly the informal science education institutions. So we really want to see an approach that has that active engagement character to make sure you're addressing that in whatever activities you're thinking about.

(Sarah): Okay. That's great. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: As a reminder if you'd like to ask a question please press star 1. Record your first and last name when prompted.

The next question comes from (Richard Getter). Your line is open.

(Richard): Hi. Thank you. It's really looking for information and resources that I haven't been able to find quite yet. I'm wondering if there's an index, a list or some way to find a point of contact for iPhone or Android Apps that have been built on top of NOAA resources that you want used.

Carrie McDougall: We definitely don't have a list of that. What about the citizen science? I mean we know some of the citizen science.

John McLaughlin: We have a few of them but it would be...

Carrie McDougall: Yes.

John McLaughlin: ...by no means an exhaustive list.

Carrie McDougall: Right.

John McLaughlin: (Unintelligence) might be another good one to email us at [oed.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:oed.grants@noaa.gov) We'll follow-up as best we can. But I guess I don't think any of us here know of an exhaustive list that would have all of them by any means but you can...

(Richard): Well it's a dynamic thing in any case. How about a starting point?

John McLaughlin: Yes.

Carrie McDougall: Right. And I mean, you know, I know this is somewhat ridiculous as an answer. But I'll offer it nonetheless.

If you go into the App Store and you type NOAA, you will get some lists there.

(Richard): Sure.

Carrie McDougall: Because it'll show all the ones that are related to NOAA.

(Richard): Right. I will follow-up with an email to the OED.

Carrie McDougall: Okay.

(Richard): All right, thanks.

Coordinator: Next we have Bo. Your line is open.

(Bo): So if we through this meeting end up finding that the people that are the science (team) that are near us are also connected to one of the people on the meeting, can we write you to connect with them? Because it seems like that would be natural partnerships with the school district and our new science museum.

((Crosstalk))

Sarah Schoedinger: This is Sarah. We don't have a way to know who's on this call. And their contact information.

(Bo): I just heard someone on the call. So I'll call down to the museum.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes.

(Bo): Okay, thanks.

Sarah Schoedinger: That would be a way to handle that.

(Bo): Okay, thank you.

Coordinator: We have no further questions on the phone lines at this time.

Sarah Schoedinger: Okay. Well we can hang out here for a few more minutes and see if anybody thinks of one. And otherwise we'll shut it down in a few minutes if there are no further questions.

Carrie McDougall: Shall we do closing remarks and then if anybody has any...?

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes.

Carrie McDougall: ...additional questions...?

Sarah Schoedinger: That's a good idea.

Carrie McDougall: ...they can ask them after we're done with "Closing" remarks?

Sarah Schoedinger: Quote on Quote, closing remarks. All right, sure. I'll be happy to take those.

So to summarize I hope at this point you've gotten the message that it's very important to read the Federal Funding Opportunity Announcement carefully. Even the parts we did not go through with you in detail.

We do anticipate that this funding opportunity will be quite competitive this year as it was last year. Just for reference last year we received 187 applications and we had 152 that went forward to Merit Review. And we were only able to fund six awards so that's about 4% of those that were reviewed.

Now this year we will, you know, be holding over probably more applications for consideration in FY '17. At least that's our plan. But, you know, you should use that to gauge how competitive you think are - or to anticipate the competitiveness of the funding opportunity.

And, you know, as Carrie mentioned early on in the presentation and I've reiterated a couple times but I'll say it one final time here, we do not anticipate issuing a solicitation for applications next year. So that's what I mean when I say we're holding over applications. We will fund some this year based on rank order and selection factors. And then we will hold some more over for consideration of funding once we know our 2017 budget.

So if you're thinking about this, please know that they're - you know, short of a drastic positive increase in our budget or a drastic I should say increase in our budget, we will not be issuing a new funding opportunity in 2017.

If you have additional questions, please do take a look at the FAQ. If you don't see an answer in the FAQ, our FAQ, then please email us at [oed.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:oed.grants@noaa.gov).

And please understand while there are four of us who are keeping an eye on that email account and will be available to respond, don't expect that you're going to get a response in five minutes because there will be a lot of people requesting information. So we will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible and it won't be days but it won't be within hours either.

So I think with that, unless Carrie, unless you have anything else you want to add or we have any further questions we can wrap this up.

Coordinator: Excuse me. We do have one final question.

Sarah Schoedinger: Okay.

Coordinator: From William. Your line is open.

(William): Hi. We had applied last year. And had actually approached the National Hurricane Center to be a partner. And we've had each of the Hurricane - the National Hurricane Center Directors up to speak to our organization at (unintelligible) Observatory in the past.

And we were sort of surprised when they said they weren't capable at all of - because of budget constraints to help us this - and that would have been last year. I think they had had a budget issue that just come up that they were perturbed about. Apparently some monies were - was drawn for a new computerized (program) that they had been working on for three or four years.

If we were to approach them again this year, I mean how could we make that work? I guess I was sort of anticipating. I was sort of taken aback. I mean every other NOAA asset that I approached were more than happy to help. I was sort of taken aback since we thought we had had a great relationship with the National Hurricane Center.

How can that be dealt with?

Carrie McDougall: The weather service can be harder to engage than other parts of NOAA partly because their structure is very different than the other parts of NOAA. And they're undergoing a reorganization right now.

And, you know, any of you who have ever been through a reorganization know that it's a hardship. And it takes a lot more effort.

And so it may just be that this is a particularly difficult time for the folks you're trying to connect with locally and that they may just really honestly have limited bandwidth to take on additional activities right now.

And so on some level there's not a whole lot that we can do about it. If someone doesn't have the available time they just may not have it.

We could try to connect you with other folks that maybe aren't as local to you or is specific to the Hurricane Center but might be able to serve in a similar capacity.

John McLaughlin: (William) this is John. One thing I would add to Carrie's answer is I think you said they cited limited funds which may or may not correspond to limited time. Limited time I would say Carrie's answer which definitely applies and may well be the case. If it is fairly a funding issue with their involvement, just make sure they are aware that this opportunity does offer the opportunity for NOAA partners to receive funding. They may not be aware of that. Sometimes they're just I think had the expectation that their involvement would be purely in kind.

But through this funding opportunity we do have that opportunity for funding for NOAA partners. So you may well have done that but if not just make sure they were aware of that opportunity exists with the funding opportunity.

(William): Sure. And I might not have stated that clearly. And maybe they didn't completely understand that so fully last year. So maybe we could approach them again with that knowledge this year.

Great. Very good, thank you.

Carrie McDougall: You're welcome.

Coordinator: And we have no further questions.

Carrie McDougall: Okay, great. Well.

Sarah Schoedinger: All right.

Carrie McDougall: Yes. The transcript will be posted by next week on the FAQ site. And otherwise good luck to you all.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes. Thank you for your attention today.

Coordinator: Once again thank you for joining. This now concludes today's conference. All lines may disconnect at this time.

END