

NWX-DOC/NOAA/CONFERENCING

**Moderator: Carrie McDougall
December 10, 2015
2:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode. During our Q&A session you may press star one on your touchtone phone if you would like to ask a question. Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. Now, I would like to turn the meeting over to Miss Carrie McDougall. Mam, you may begin.

Carrie McDougall: Hello everyone. Welcome to the December 10 Informational Teleconference for the 2016 Environmental Literacy Grants program. I am Carrie McDougall, (unintelligible) for this opportunity and I'll turn it over to (Sara Shedinger).

(Sara Shedinger): Hi. I am (Sara Shedinger). I am also senior program here in the office of education helping Carrie lead our environmental literacy grants program.

Carrie McDougall: So the two of us will be leading the conference today. But, there are some other members of our team that I want to acknowledge who are also participating in the call today. And, they are (John McLaughlin), (Christopher Nelson), and (Lisa Knock-a-more-ah). You may hear some of their voices later on when we're answering the Q&A portion of this call. So, as you heard the Operator say at the beginning, this teleconference is being transcribed. And, we will post the transcription to our frequently asked questions or SAQ Web site by next Tuesday, December 16, 2015.

So, if you want to look back and review anything you thought you missed, you can do that, and you can also forward that link to others who missed the call. Also, note that we will be offering a second teleconference that will be, more or less, a repeat of what we are doing today on Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at the same time of day. So, if you want to participate again you're welcome to, or just send membership of your team that's when they can participate in that one.

And then we will do the same thing, we will record that call and post the transcript to that call to our FAQ Web site. So, hopefully that'll be ample opportunity for you all to answer, get questions answered, and hear the overview of the funding opportunity. So, today what we are going to do is review that funding opportunity and take your questions.

Also, as the Operator indicated you are all muted right now while we give the presentation. And, once we complete the funding opportunity overview, we will turn it over to hear your questions. If you have a question, you will indicate you have a question per the Operator's instructions, which she will repeat once we get to that part of the call.

You will enter the question queue and when the Operator indicates, you will be unmuted and you'll be able to ask your question to us, and then we will answer it, hopefully. So, that's the way the call is going to go today. So now, I want to make sure that you have a helpful document in front of you to follow along. And, that is the federal funding opportunity. So, the title of the federal funding opportunity is strengthening the public and/or K12 students' environmental literacy for community resilience.

And you want to make sure you have the 2016 version. And, the way to make sure you have the 2016 version is if you go to page two of the SFO, which is what we call this document for short, you'll see on the header portion of the document, funding opportunity number, NOAA-SEP-OEP-2016-2004737. So, make sure you have the 2016 version, because the published 2015 announcement with essentially the same title, and so it might be easy to get the two confused. So make sure you have the 2016 version.

And, if you don't have it in front of you, you can get a copy of it in grants.gov. So if you don't have a copy of the funding opportunity, we want to make sure you get it. So, go to grants.gov right now and under the search grants tab in the upper left corner, there are three different ways you can search for opportunities.

You can type in environmental literacy for example and you should then see a listing below, and one of those search results will be the funding opportunity we're going to be discussing today, which is NOAA-SEP-OEP-2016-2004737. So, make sure you have that one and then we will review that. I'm just going to give you a minute in case you don't have it.

Also note that if you're new to grants.gov, one handy feature is that you can sign up to receive updates on a particular opportunity. We highly recommend you doing that because if we make any changes to the funding announcement as the competition opens, you will automatically get an email from grants.gov when any status is changed on that for this particular competition, so you can do that in grants.gov.

That's a handy way to be notified about changes. All right. So, hopefully you have the announcement of federal funding opportunity or FFO for short in front of you now. This is the primary document that you should use to guide your application instructions and submission. (Unintelligible) the most comprehensive instructions for what we're seeking to fund and how you should submit, how you should format and submit your application to us.

So, it's really imperative that you read the entire document. It is long. It is a bit bureaucratic. I will note that it is ten pages shorter than last year's version, so we've tried to tighten it up, and hopefully make it a bit more concise. It's still 34 pages of somewhat bureaucratic language. And, as boring as some parts of it might be, it is essential that you read the entire document.

And, we're going to walk you through it today, and we're going to highlight certain sections that we think are really, really essential. But, it doesn't mean that these other sections aren't essential. So, I'm going to start with page one; and what you'll see on page one is a table of contents. So this is a handy way to quickly jump to other parts of the document.

Next, on page two starts what is essentially like the abstract or summary of the overall announcements. This summary starts on page two to page four. So, I'm going

to skip those three pages because everything that is covered in these pages is covered in more detail on the following pages. So just know that the first three pages are a summary of the entire document.

So starting with page five, the first thing that you see here is an overview of the overall program that funds this particular competition. And then I'm just going to spend a few minutes reviewing this section with you. So I'm hoping you are following along looking at the document as I'm reviewing it with you. So, the first paragraph under overviews talks about the environmental literacy grants program that NOAA offers broadly.

So the goal of the environmental literacy grants program is that it supports projects that inform, educate, and inspire a diverse school of educator/students and the public to use with compliance to improve ocean coastal stewardship and increasing safety (unintelligible) to NOAA to environmental hazards. And we referenced the NOAA education strategic plan here. This is a new document that has been published since we offered our last opportunity.

And, that's an important document that you should make sure you take a look at if you're thinking about applying. So, these particular grants, NOAAs environmental literacy grants for formal and informal education activities at a lot of different geographic scales, from local, to regional, to national levels. And, all of them must address NOAAs mission of science, service, and stewardship.

NOAAs vision encompasses a future where communities and their ecosystems are healthy and resilient in the face of sudden or prolonged change. And so, you can see how resilient communities is a core component of that vision. So these grants also support NOAAs vision of resilient communities. Moving along to the second paragraph on page five. This spells the rationale for why the environmental literacy grant is focusing this particular competition originally the way we are this year.

So, you're going to see some references to, again some really important Web sites and guiding documents that we have used to structure this funding opportunity. And

these again are documents that you might want to check out to become more familiar, especially if you're not familiar with NOAA.

These are the kinds of documents that will help you get familiar with NOAA because we are only going to fund projects that really are highly, highly related to what NOAA does. So, these are documents that will help you understand what NOAA does. So, the first sentence here is many of those communities are continuing to have issues related to preventing, withstanding, and recovering from disruptions caused by environmental threats and vulnerability.

These threats and vulnerabilities include, but are not limited to, severe storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, heavy precipitation events, persistent drought, heat waves, increased global temperatures, acidification of the ocean, and sea level rise. So, this list here gives you a sense of the kinds of things that we're expecting to fund topic wise.

Again, it's not the comprehensive list, but it should give you a really good picture of what we're hoping to see the science focus be. So preparing for and responding effectively to present and future environmental challenges enhances the resilience of communities. And then, we cite a recent report from the national academies talking about disaster resilience and how it's important to have an educated public to be disaster resilient.

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 destruction with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment.

And again, you're going to see this theme throughout the funding opportunity. The balance between social well-being, economy, and the environment is another element we're helping to see addressed in these proposals. Building these proposals will be the emphasis of the environmental literacy grants for the next several years. So, some

of you may be familiar with the fact that we issued a very similar funding opportunity in 2015. We have made some minor adjustments to this particular competition.

But, it's more or less the same in essence, the same as we issued in 2015. We will highlight the places where we have made changes in 2015. And, as this last sentence states at the top of page six, we are planning this to be the focus for the next several years. So, if you don't feel like you're ready to submit an application to this particular competition, we do anticipate publishing one next year; of course, pending funding availability.

So, the next section is the goal statement; this is a really important little paragraph as you might imagine. This lays out the goal for this particular funding opportunity, so I'm on the top of page six. The goal of this federal funding opportunity is to strengthen the public and/or caseload of students, environmental literacy, to enable informed decision-making necessary for community resilience to constrain weather events and other environmental hazards.

So if your project doesn't do that, it's probably not a good idea to think about submitting an application to this particular opportunity. So now, I'm going to move onto mid-way down page six, under the heading description of project activities. This is, I would say the most important paragraph of the entire funding opportunity. This really lays out what we want to see the projects doing.

And, there are some essential sentences in here that if you don't have this in the project, we really won't consider it for funding, or it really won't do well in the review process, so you really, really want to make sure you internalize this paragraph and understand it fully. And if you don't understand this paragraph, you want to make sure you ask questions.

So, projects should build the environmental literacy necessary for community resilience by focusing on geographic awareness, and then understanding of earth's systems and the stress and vulnerabilities that are associated with a community's location.

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, there is a lot going on in this sentence and, you know, I could address each one, but hopefully it's written in plain language so that you understand. But, one of the things I just want to highlight is that we're really expecting projects to blend and draw on the disciplines of geography, social science, ecological and physical sciences, engineering, and economics.

So, we're really seeking not just straight, typical, sort of NOAA science-focused projects, but these need to be multi-disciplinary types of approaches. So, that's a little different from some of the things we've funded in the past. So, consider that if your project isn't as comprehensive in that way.

Projects will be firmly based on the established and scientific evidence about current and future natural hazards of stress and safety in the communities, and consider socio, economic, and ecological factors. Again, we're seeking projects that have an appropriate mix of a very strong science background with a very strong ecological approach for what would be appropriate in getting your target audience.

And, sometimes that maybe achieved through partnerships with a science organization and an educational organization, so consider if you have the right mix of partners and people onboard to have the appropriate dual strength there. Project should also, one, leverage and incorporate relevancy and local hazard administration and/or adaptation plans; and two, collaborate with institutions that are involved in efforts to develop or implement those plans.

So, this sentence is one of the places where we've altered from last year's funding opportunity. We've strengthened our language about what we want to see in terms of

connection to an existing local or state level plan. So, we really expect applicants to do a really comprehensive search of what are the plans that are already existent for their community at multiple scales.

Whether that be community, city, state, county, whatever is appropriate, however that search in their proposal, and show which parts of the plans are going to be brought into the project, are relevant to the project, and then for the second one here, how they might develop collaborations with institutions who are involved in implementing those plans or developing those plans. So this is a new area that we really hope to see well developed in the top-ranked proposals, so make sure you understand that and think about how your project might be able to do that.

Projects may focus on a single type of environmental hazard or a range of hazards that may impact a community or communities. So, this gets at the scope of your project, so you might have a very focused project that's focused on say hurricanes in one community on the Gulf Coast because that would be an appropriate environmental threat to address for that community. Or, you may talk about how you're going to address sea level rise, flooding, and hurricanes for several communities along the Gulf Coast.

So, you can determine this scale of your project, and it can be one threat you're addressing, or multiple threats, but you need to make sure you're clearly describing that, and also describing the need for that, how you came to that scale decision. NOAA will consider funding a wide range of project types, but all projects must actively engage participants in learning and addressing real-world issues. So, what do we mean by actively engage?

This is something that we recognize might be somewhat vague. We have tried to provide a bit more of a description of what is meant by this term on pages 16 and 17, which we'll get into later when we get to those pages of the funding announcement. But, just to give you a sense of what's in that section, active engagement means things like interactive discussions of your target population, deliberations, or

investigations about an issue, or participation in simulations where different scenarios or solutions are explored.

In other words, we're not looking for projects where the communication is really one way or top/down. For example, you bring in say an expert speaker and that person speaks to the audience, and the audience then learns more about resilience and the science behind it. We're really looking for active engagement of that target audience through the deliberative process or other processes like maybe citizen science or something that might be appropriate for that particular project.

In addition, projects must utilize facts, scientific data, data access tools, data visualization, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. This is one of these hallmark components of our grants program. Every project that we fund, excuse me, must incorporate and utilize heavily at least one NOAA asset. And, typically more than one NOAA asset is being utilized. So, we really expect full incorporation and a detailed description of how you will use that asset in your project, not just a passing reference, NOAA has the sea level rise here and we'll use that for example.

We really want you to unpack exactly how that tool is appropriate for your project and how you will use it. In order to facilitate the use of NOAAs assets projects are strongly encouraged to partner with relevant NOAA entities, their offices, programs, et cetera, and/or NOAA employees and affiliates. NOAAs education Web site, which we provide the URL, and an additional list of relevant assets, which we also provide the next URL, provides links to NOAA, data sets, potential NOAA partners, and other resilience related assets from federal and non-federal organizations.

So, these two Web sites, everyone who is going to apply should look at for links to NOAA assets. But in particular, that second URL, the resilience assets html page, that one is one that we've created specifically for this particular funding opportunity. We have listed reports that we think are relevant to resilience. We have listed some of NOAAs top and most essential resilience assets. So please make sure you look

there and spend a little time getting to know those additional documents that may help you understand what we're seeking to fund.

And moving onto page seven, project topics must relate to NOAA's mission in at least one of the areas of ocean-critical great lake weather and climate sciences and stewardship, and should focus on one or more of NOAA's goals of NOAA's next generation strategic plans; again, that's saying that we're only going to fund things that relate to NOAA's mission, so make sure you familiarize yourself with NOAA's mission.

The next paragraph on page seven, projects must be implemented within the United States and its territories. So this gives that one not really seeking projects that are going to be heavily implemented outside of the United States. There can maybe be a very small component that has a non-U.S., but we're really seeking projects that a vast majority of the impact is going to occur in the United States.

Now, in terms of the scale of those projects, that's up to you. It's up to you to justify and rationalize the need for the scale you choose. It can be local. It can be regional; highly dependent on the particular threat and community scale you want to work on. We expect to see a justification of that scale and a discussion of the project components that might be applicable to projects that fit in other spaces, in other places.

So, for example, if you do choose a single community to focus on, and you're going to develop a program that works fair, we would like you to explain how that program might work in other places, how it might have applicability to other places. Applications that propose the expansion or enhancement of the previously funded projects that meet the requirements of this funding opportunity, they are eligible so you can submit.

However, applicants must exclusively demonstrate the significant accomplishments of the previous award and how the proposed projects have significantly improved and/or build on this great initial award. Also, a lot of work, because this is a

community-scale type of funding announcement, a lot of the work that's already being done in this area is supported by community foundations.

And, community foundations not only can support similar work, but they can also ensure that as conveners for some of your stakeholders, so we're strongly recommending you look into potentially finding a community foundation partner, not necessarily that they will co-fund or anything, but they may be a partner in terms of helping you implement your projects. So, we've provided a URL to help you find community foundations in your area.

Also, I want to talk about a couple of other funding opportunities that NOAA offers because it may be that your project fits better with one of those. There are two other resilience-focused funding programs that NOAA offers. One is called the coastal ecosystem resiliency grants program. And, that program is administered by the national marine fisheries service, which is a part of NOAA.

The purpose of that program is to fund projects that will develop healthy and sustainable ecosystems through habitat restoration and conservation, and we've provided the URL to learn more about that program. They've also recently announced their 2015 awards, so you can see the kinds of projects that they've funded in their inaugural year.

They also have the regional coastal resilience grant program, which is administered by NOAA's national (unintelligible) service. This program supports regional approaches that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather, immense climate hazards and changing ocean conditions.

And again, you're going to want to consult that URL to learn more about these projects. These are both coastally focused, so they're coastal as in titles for both of these funding opportunities, and so that's an important distinction. The grant opportunity that environmental literacy offers is not coastal, it can be, but it doesn't have to be. Whereas, these two programs are both coastal community focused.

Also, we have another education program that is offered by the NOAA office of education, and it is called the (Be Wet) program, and it is a watershed education and training program. That program is also a regional environmental education program, and you can learn more about that by going to the NOAA office of education Web site. If you just Google NOAA office of education it should lead you to our page, and then you'll find (B Web) under the grants programs.

(Be Wet) is in several different coastal regions and I don't want to get into too many details, but it basically provides K12 students and teachers with hands on opportunities to get wet sort of, to do watershed education, so take a look at (Sea wet). Your project may be better aligned with that opportunity as well. Okay, so moving onto the target audiences, which is on the bottom of page seven.

The target audiences for this funding opportunity are the broader public, K12 students, and they also included informal educators, which includes interpreters and endorsements, and formal educators, pre- or in-service, and can also include 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're really not looking at college students or grad students as a target audience. Now, those folks can be engaged as implementers in a project, but they shouldn't be the target audience for your effort. Similarly, professionals working in the field of community resilience, this is not a program that funds professional training or education for professionals who are already working in the real of community resilience. So that's not something we're seeking.

Projects focused on engaging public audiences should also involve individuals who represent multiple sectors of society who are interested in, you know, engaging a broad group of folks in your projects. There is also 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 changes. So make sure you're addressing this issue or maybe you have a project that's entirely focused

on serving underserved communities, and that would be something that we are interested in that's important.

Okay. I'm on page eight, project evaluations. Project descriptions should include robust evaluation plans. So, another hallmark of the environmental literacy grants program is we take evaluation very seriously and we expect you to do so as well. So we are expecting you to have a very well-developed evaluation plan in your proposal.

You should have engaged an evaluator in the development of your proposal. That evaluator may be someone external and may be contracted through a sub-award that you're going to describe in your budget section, or it may be an in-house evaluator, but someone that is very distinct and is not part of the project otherwise, so that they can remain neutral and can be objective when they are doing their evaluation.

So, we want to see evaluation plans in your proposal that include the measurement of the projects progress, work meaning of goals and objectives of the project, as well as the goal of this funding program. Typically, funded projects include both formative and summative evaluation, and use best practices for evaluating the type of project that you are conducting. So we really expect that to be well developed in your project description.

There are several more, there's a lot more instruction here, I'm not going to get into details, but just know that we have looked at this very, very carefully and we have evaluators on our review panel to make sure that the evaluation portion of your project is robust. Going down to the last paragraph of page eight, this is about dissemination and sort of broader applicability of your project. So, to further inform the broad fields of K12 and informal science education about what was learned, applicants are encouraged to develop appropriate project dissemination strategy.

This is another important element. Don't just tack this on at the end. We really hope you will think about this carefully and embed it in your plan. We hope that you engage your peers in active discussion about best practices. This may occur through attending annual meetings, or other appropriate discussion areas. And, we also would

like to encourage PIs to post their evaluation reports to public sites, such as informalscience.org for any products that are developed for the national science federal digital library or the (smile) program.

Moving onto page nine, award dates and mission goals, so we have issued this funding opportunity, and it is for the federal fiscal year 2016, which ends on September 30, 2016. So that's our main driver is that we want to get awards made for this particular funding opportunity by the end of that fiscal year date, by September 30. Projects should have a start date no earlier than October one.

You could have a later start date, but we would like you to not have a start date earlier than October 1. And, this is just a statement we have to have in all of our funding announcements, that this funding opportunity meets NOAA afore mentioned goals, so it's a broadly applicable funding opportunity that really serves all of NOAAs mission.

Section six on page nine, definitions, so there are some certain terms in here that may be specific to the way NOAA uses that term. And so, we've tried to provide definitions that help you understand what we mean by that term. Environmental data is one of them. Later on in the funding announcement you'll see reference to a data-sharing plan. And, it's important for you to understand that data-sharing plans only apply if you're collecting environmental data.

So, here's the definition of what we mean by environmental data; NOAA assets, as I said earlier, every project that we fund must utilize and explain how they utilize the NOAA asset. And, this is the definition of what we mean by NOAA asset, as well as, a repeat of URLs for getting access to those listed assets.

Outcomes, this is to help everybody get on the same page. So, what we mean by outcomes, since the book has different ideas about what outcomes means versus our definition of outcomes. And then, following on page ten is our definition of outlook. And, finally but certainly not least important, resilience. This is the definition of

resilience that we're using for this particular funding opportunity. It comes from the U.S. climate resilience toolkit.

Just so everybody understands what we're talking about when we say resilience, this is the definition for resilience. And, finally in the references section you'll see all of the lists of citations for everything that we have referenced in the earlier part of the funding opportunity. So, moving onto page 11, B, program priorities, there are no other (unintelligible) priorities other than what I already presented.

We have to list our authority for offering this program and that is provided by the America competes act. And, now I am going to turn it over to (Sara). She's going to walk us through the rest of the funding document. And, I forgot to mention at the beginning that if you have any notes, I hope you're jotting them down and, you know, questions that is so that you can ask them. And, we're happy to re-visit any of these parts we've gone over when we get to the Q&A session.

So, if there's anything that I've said that wasn't clear, you'll have an opportunity to dig into that in a few minutes. Okay? (Sara)?

(Sara Shedinger): Okay. Thanks Carrie. So, I'm going to start at the bottom of page 11, but really it's the top of page 12. It's the next section on funding availability. So, NOAA anticipates having approximately two million dollars for federal financial assistance this fiscal year. We do not currently know what our FY16 budget is. We're hoping we'll find that out, hopefully next week or two. But, in any event, we're anticipating, hoping for roughly the same amount of funding that we had for last year.

And, we anticipate given that funding level, funding approximately four to eight projects. These projects will be funded in the form of cooperative agreements because we anticipate there being significant NOAA involvement. We may hold over a sub set of the applications that rank highly to consider for funding in 2017. Generally, we do this to hedge our bets in case we get a very low appropriation, low budget for 2017, we may deem it not worthwhile running a brand new competition for so little money.

And, as Carrie has mentioned earlier, we do plan on running this kind of competition with this focus for at least the next several years. Your projects should be between two and five years in duration, no more and no less. And, the total requests should be between 250,000 and 500,000 dollars for all years of the project, and that is inclusive of your direct and indirect cost on the project.

So, this is a minimum requirement, it's important to meet this. If you don't meet it, your application, this is one of the ways that your application would not move forward to review. Another important thing to note, and I'm now down in the middle of the page, on the paragraph that begins the combined total request, should not include any funding that would support NOAA partners and the project, including personnel who may be involved with the activities and any tasks that they may undertake.

That doesn't mean that they cannot receive support. We just cannot include it in your budget request. So it should not show up in any of the budget narrative, the SF424A, any of the budgetary related documents should not show up there. Instead, we have a place in the application where we will want to explain the NOAA involvement, and any associated costs, if there are associated costs.

Please note that those costs cannot exceed ten percent of the total federal request you are making to our office for this project. So, now I am going to move down to, or up to the top of page 13. As I mentioned just a moment ago, please be sure that your project is about two to five years in duration. And, as Carrie indicated earlier, we will want projects to start on 1, October or later.

In terms of the funding instrument, the reason we used cooperative agreements, and we're not using simply using grants is because we anticipate that there will be substantial NOAA involvement. So, any time that the agency is going to be substantially involved in your project, you know, adding towards its success, we have to make a cooperative agreement.

And, there will be terms spelled out, and special award conditions that explain exactly what NOAAs involvement will be. And that protects you and that protects us so that everybody is on the same page at the beginning of the project. So now, I'm going to move down to section three related to eligibility, this is on page 13, in the middle of the page.

So eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to institutions of higher education, other non-profits, which may include informal education institutions, such as museums, zoos, and aquariums, K to 12 public and independent schools and school systems, and state, local, and Indian tribal governments for the United States.

So, it's a pretty broad range of organization types that may be allowed to submit an application. However, for-profit organizations and foreign institutions, and individuals may not apply. That doesn't mean that those for-profit, foreign institutions, or individuals may not be partners on a grant, or be a co-PI, or a sub award in some respect. But, they are not to be a primary recipient of the fund.

I'm going to skip down to the third paragraph in this section. Please be aware, we strongly advise that you only have, that a person serves as a PI on only one application. We know that this is often a highly collaborative community we work with. We anticipate that an individual may be on multiple proposals to us. That's fine, but you should be a PI on only one.

You may be a co-PI or some other key personnel on other projects. That's fine. And, institutions may submit more than one distinct application. So institutions are not limited in the number of applications that can be submitted. So, now I'm going to move to the top of page 14.

There is no cost share requirement for this funding opportunity, so please be aware of that. And, in terms of other criteria that affect eligibility, really I'm going to go over this in the next few sections, but we don't have anything outside of what I'm about to describe to you. So, if you can move down to application and submission information. This next paragraph is very important.

Please be aware that application packages are available through grants.gov. In fact, when you download this announcement, you can also download the application package, and that's a good check to make sure you don't have any software bugs or anything like that in terms of accessing the package.

However, just because you can download the application package, doesn't mean you can submit it. So another important thing that you need to be aware of is that your institution -the authorized representatives for your institution must have the credentials to submit an application through to us via grants.gov and in order to get those credentials, or ensure that they're up to date, they need to make sure that your institution identifier, your account information within the system for award management which is more briefly known as SAM is up to date and then that needs to be up to date before you can register for an account in grants.gov.

So last year I understand that there were quite a few hiccups for folks submitting applications who hadn't submitted in a while, their credentials were out of date on SAM and that messed up their ability to submit to grants.gov. And these updates to your credentials take time in establishing an account with both of these systems take time.

So if - even if you're not certain you're going to apply for a funding opportunity right now, if you're thinking about it and semi-seriously considering it, I would get on the ball and start figuring out what you need to do to get registered, because I would hate for you to put a lot of time and effort into pulling together all the other pieces of the application and then run into this technical problem that essentially makes all your other work moot.

Moving down to the next paragraph, each applicant must be registered in grants.gov. Please contact grants.gov if you're having any technical issues. There we've provided you with an email and a toll-free number in the U.S. anyway for guidance from them, customer support. Also, in the notes, so please note that Web site that's cited there for applicant FAQs for grants.gov -those are different from our FAQ pages by the

way - those should provide you access to a lot of information to help you prepare to apply through grants.gov.

The last thing I'd want to note here is that we in the Office of Education are not the people who can help you troubleshoot grants.gov. Because we don't run that Web site we don't have anything to do with its management. So we simply receive the applications on the other end. We post our request for applications and we receive applications through that competition.

Okay. But now I'm going to move on to Section 4B, which starts at the bottom of Page 14. This is on the content and form of the application. And this section is important because this is another place where people often trip up and their applications are disqualified from going on to merit review.

First off, I mentioned this FAQ page here. This one at the bottom of Page 14, not the one in the note just above it - that is our FAQ page. I strongly recommend you take a look at that particularly in the sections on preparing to apply. But actually all of it is relevant.

And we will be updating that FAQ page as needed when we you know start getting questions in a particular area and it's more than just one or two, we realize that we need to probably - it becomes a frequently asked question, and we update the FAQ.

So now I'm at the top of Page 15 and just a quick note, and this is really for those of you who have applied for funding from us in recent years. One thing that is different from past years - not the only thing - but one of the things is this year we're not going to consider collaborative applications. Now we accept people to be collaborative in how they operate as a team, but this really has to do functionally more with how you submit an application and the number of awards we make for support of a project.

In past years we have allowed multiple applications to come in related to a particular project and those got reviewed as a group as one application. This year we will not do that. So if you've got a team of people you're considering working with, you're

going to have to identify which person's institution is going to be the submitting institution for your project team. And then the other institutions and individuals on that project team would be sub-awards if they're receiving any funding from us for the project.

Okay. Now I'm moving on to format requirements. Just please pay attention to these. This is a minimum requirement. They are designed to ensure that our reviewers have you know don't lose their eyesight in the process being able to - in the process of reviewing for us. And that your application is as clear and concise as possible.

I will call your attention to the last sentence in that paragraph. Because we want searchable documents, that really helps our reviewers, it helps us, please do not submit scanned documents.

That is an image file, whether it's PDFs, tiff or other. Other than letters of commitment. We understand you get letters of commitment, they're put on letterhead, somebody signs them with a wet signature and you scan it. That's fine. But for all the other documents, those should be coming through to us as PDF or WORD files or Excel files. And that will enable us to use them a lot more efficiently.

Okay. Now moving on to content requirements in the middle of Page 15. One blanket statement I want to make at the beginning of this because I'm not going to mention it at each subsection - there are different page limit requirements for the elements of your application. So - and sometimes there are no page requirements.

So pay attention to that. One of the things that we do to help you ensure that you do address all of the required elements in a section and figure out whether you need to address any of the optional elements is to follow one of our checklists. And this is on our applications template page.

The URL for that is in the bottom of the last sentence of the second paragraph here. And I really think that's going to be a useful resource for you in addition to a title

page template and some sample forms that have been filled out so you don't have to guess how we want the information.

There's guidance documents there that help you basically it's a checklist. It helps you make sure you've got everything that you need to submit and in some cases it will tell you where you need to attach it to which form in grants.gov. And I know we've gotten some questions about that already.

Okay. So moving on to the required forms. These are provided for you in grants.gov. These are standard forms. You will have to fill them out. I think only the SFLLL is the one that does not need to be filled out by everybody, so it's up to you to determine whether that's needed.

But this - you will need to make sure that you can fill these out. You don't have any errors and so forth. The title page - this is another area last year where we had some problems with people for whatever reason did not attach a title page so we do provide a template. The template ensures that all the information you see listed here at the top - I'm at the top of Page 16, by the way - all the information that you see listed here in lower Roman numeral i to vi - that information is contained on our title page template.

However, you're not required to use the template. But you are required to make sure you provide all this information in to us here. So please be aware of that because that can render an application incomplete if we don't have it.

The 15-page project description - I'm not at the middle of the page - this is a big hairy section of the (FFO). I'm not going to read through it ad nauseum, but I will call your attention to some things that may be helpful to you.

This is obviously the guts of your application. Where you're going to describe what you're doing, who you're working with, and why you're approaching your particular issues in your community the way you are. So again, I mentioned page limits. In this particular section you've got 15 pages. That includes any figures or other visual

materials but it does not include other sections of the application, such as the title pages, the budget information, your references section, your milestones section, the data-sharing plan if you have to provide one, resumes and the description of no-involvement, current and pending support, and letters of commitment.

Those other things are not included in this 15-page project description. Again, you can find a template for the project description on our application template page which may help you in developing this section of your application.

Please be sure to describe your proposed project completely and in order to help you do this, the following subsections have been called out. You know, you need to describe the proposed goals for your project and how it is meeting the overall goal of this proposed, or for this funding opportunity.

You need to talk about the activities that will be undertaken, the audiences that you will be reaching out to, and why, you need to talk about the geographical scale as Carrie mentioned in the very beginning. This is something that we're very interested in. Discuss the project's geographical scale and any applicability of what you're doing at a larger scale or in more communities.

We understand that these are going to be more localized than grants that we have funded in previous years but we do want people to be thinking about how this information can be scaled up either through expansion in a particular region or replication in multiple regions.

What's the transferability of your idea? You should be thinking about that as you're developing your project idea and putting it on paper.

You should describe in this section the roles of your partners. You and your partners. How you're going to coordinate and this is also where you would describe any partnerships that will involve the use of NOAA assets. So who's going to be involved, how are they going to help you use those NOAA assets? That's a very important section.

Obviously we're going to be interested in assessing the qualifications and the capabilities of the personnel and the institutions applying. So that's an important section as are a description of which NOAA data - data access tools and other assets - will be incorporated into your project activities.

As Carrie mentioned earlier, we are very interested in seeing how your project will be connected to relevant state or local hazard mitigation or other adaptation plans that may exist in your area. And if they don't exist, you know, how are you going to be involved in helping them come into being? Which people are you going to be working with? How are you plugged into that community that in the process of developing those plans? Because pretty much every community at this point is developing some sort of hazard mitigation plan.

And then finally, you should describe how your project activities will be evaluated, who's going to be the evaluator on the project, and Carrie already went into a fair amount of detail on Section 1A-4 regarding guidance on evaluations, so do refer to that section for assistance.

And then of course we want to know how you're going to disseminate the results of your project beyond those folks who are directly participating in it.

Now I'm at the top of Page 18. So this next couple of pages are the other sections I briefly mentioned that are important components. I'm not going to go through them ad nauseum. You've got your milestone charts, your brief resumes, I will call out on brief resumes we want - you must have principle investigators' and co-principle investigators' resumes. It would also be helpful to have any key personnel on your project. And you know, we don't limit the number of resumes you can attach. We do ask that you keep them to three pages. But each - but you can have as many relevant personnel as your project listed. And that helps the reviewers and it helps us assess the qualifications of capabilities of the project team.

The description of the NOAA involvement in your project again - this doesn't this is exclusive of the page limit for your project description. This is where you would put any information about the budget that may be required to support NOAA personnel in your project. And that budget should not exceed 10% of the total federal request that you are making to our office for your project. It can cover the same kinds of costs that would be covered under you know your proposal. It should - this figure, this dollar figure, if there is one, and there doesn't have to be one, then NOAA personnel may say they're going to provide their time and expertise to you in kind.

But if there is any cost associate with it, please do not include it in the budget request information on the title page, the SF-424, the SF-424-A. That just helps us keep very clear on what we're going to be transferring internally if we do recommend your application for award and what would be going to you all directly as an institutional recipient.

Finally, you've got current and pending support. Again, we provide a template for that. Now I'm at the top of Page 19 and we start another long section and this has to do with the budget, so you know, given the relative level of detail in this section, I'm not going to go through it ad nauseum here, but it is important and there's a lot of great information again bureaucratic, a lot of it as Carrie said at the beginning, but it's important information that will help you ensure we get what we need to both assess the merit of your application and to do other reviews later on down the line.

Do take a good look at that. There's a lot of information on indirect cost rates. There were some new rules that went into effect last year and so if you haven't applied in a while, take a look at those. Those are on Page 20. But please meet me now on the top of Page 21.

And so I just want to draw your attention to a couple of statements at the top of this page. First of all, if you have any kind of in-kind resources or equipment that your institution or your partner's institutions are contributing toward the project that are going to be necessary for the success of the project, please be sure to include some description of those in the budget narrative section.

Also, on the next paragraph down, there are a couple of Web sites that may be helpful to you. The first one is provided by our Grants Management Division and that is their guidance regarding their budget narrative details. I will tell you that we reiterate a lot of that guidance or much of it in the guidance we provide you on our application templates page where there are not only templates that give you checklists for what you need to know to fill out your budget narrative and the budget detailed table that we want you to have, but also sample SF-424As and the like.

Carrie has mentioned earlier if you're collecting environmental data, and she referenced that in the definitions section, you need to provide a data-sharing plan. If you're not going to be collecting environmental data as part of your project, then simply state that so that we're not wondering whether you forgot a part.

Data and information that are collected as part of the project evaluation are not considered environmental data and information, so you don't need to worry about it if you're collecting data for the evaluation.

All right. So, I'm now going to skip on down to the top of Page 22 to Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment are not a required part of the application. But they are an important part of the application. So your application would not be disqualified if you had no Letters of Support - or I should say Letters of Commitment attached. However, we look at these letters and the reviewers look at these letters to understand - it's an indicator of commitment on the part of your partners. And it also helps spell out exactly what they understand they're going to be doing on behalf of your project. So we strongly recommend that you get those. Those are things that we look for.

No one is required to provide an (IFA) questionnaire and I've already talked to you about the system on award management, so let's go down to submission dates and times. That's at the bottom paragraph on Page 22.

So our deadline for applications is 11:59:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on February 8. I believe that's a Monday. Please note that the personnel in this office will only be available up until 5:00 pm, or we can only guarantee we'll be available to answer questions up until 5:00 pm. So - any you will be submitting things through grants.gov. We will not accept hard copy or emailed applications. If you have problems submitting your application through grants.gov because of credential issues or something else, I can't help you. If you don't get it in by that deadline, you're cut off. Because at 11:59:59 pm, after - at 12 midnight on February 9, your submission is rejected if you try to submit it.

We all recommend that you try submitting at least two days before the deadline if you can manage that. If you've not used the system before, please let us know if you need to submit you know a dummy application to make sure your credentials are going through because you've not used this system and you're unfamiliar with it. Let us know and we can attempt it. Please know that it can take up to two days before we receive an application. And during that time you receive two email confirmations. The first one tells you that you've submitted an application. And the second one confirms that grants.gov found no problems with it and they've forwarded it on to the Agency.

And again, it can take up to two days for grants.gov to validate or reject your application. And so it can take two days before you get that second email. If you don't get both of these emails right away, I would suggest contacting the grants.gov help desk and starting a ticket and trying to find out what's going on and troubleshoot that.

All right. So that takes us through the first paragraph on the top of Page 23. I'm going to skip down to the next section. This is related to the evaluation criteria and our review.

I'm not going to read through every single evaluation criterion because we'll be here until 6:00 pm tonight if I do that. But what I will say is we worked very hard to ensure that what we - the elements or the characteristics of a project that we consider

to be successful are incorporated in these evaluation criteria. And one thing that's different from last year is we've in the past given relative weight to these criteria and we have not broken down the subcriteria, which are, you know, after the dashes in each main criterion.

We didn't break those out for you and tell you the relative weight among the subcriteria. We've done that this year. So for instance, you can see in Criterion 1, which is the importance or relevance in applicability of proposed project to the program goals, that's worth a total of 30 points out of 100 points for your potential application score.

The sub-criterion under it are then after each one we list the points that all together if you added them up would equal that 30 points. So that breaks - that point breakdown will give you a good indication of the relative importance we're giving to each of these subcriteria. And that ought to help inform your project design and your proposal.

Now I'm going to skip along in the interests of time to Section B on the Review and Selection Process, and now I'm at the middle of Page 26. So your application goes through a couple different reviews. The first review it goes through is an administrative review. So as I mentioned very early on, we've got a couple - not a couple, more than a couple - minimum requirements.

Let me review those with you here. Because if your application fails to meet any of these minimum requirements, it will not go on to merit review. So the first is, make sure that your institution is an eligible institution to apply.

The second one is make sure your application is received on time. Make sure that you have all the required elements of that application submitted and that they follow all our formatting requirements.

You need to make sure that you are requesting no more than \$500,000 for all years of your project and no less than \$250,000 for all years of your project.

And you need to make sure that your project duration is between 2 and 5 years.

So if any - so if you fail any one of these or multiples of them, your application is disqualified and it does not go on to merit review. Enough said about that.

So now let's talk a little bit - I'm at the top of Page 27 - talk a little bit about our review process briefly. We anticipate having a large number of applications come in to this competition. We had a very large number last year. And we're anticipating something similar. But on the off-chance everybody takes a holiday and decides they don't want to apply, if we have 40 or fewer applications, we will run a standard - what we consider a standard sort of review process where we convene a panel of relevant experts with relevant expertise and experience and they review your applications and discuss them and score them and then we get a rank order that we work from.

Because we are anticipating a large volume of applications to come in, for any applications - well I should say, if we receive more than 40, those applications will first go through a mail review. And what that means is instead of convening a panel, where people meet to discuss, we assign three reviewers to each application. Again, we will have a pool of reviewers with relevant expertise given the breadth of topics and audiences and so forth that are covered in these proposals.

We will assign the applications to those reviewers. They will get at least three reviews. They will have written comments and it will help establish a preliminary rank order.

We will look at that rank order and we will look for natural breaks in the rank order to determine roughly 40 applications that will go forward to a panel review. So then the 40 or so that move forward to a panel review will get reviewed a second time. The others will be declined funding. And those 40 the panel will convene and they will re-score them according to the same evaluation criteria and they will establish

the final rank order and then that is the rank order that we will use to make recommendations to our selecting officials.

And there are occasions when we do not follow the rank order and that usually occurs when we feel we need to distribute funds geographically or among institution types or the like. And all of that is described on Pages 27 and 28.

We will be reviewing applications from March to June 2016. And as Carrie said, we will make funding recommendations and actually make awards no later than September 30, with a start date of 1 October.

As far as award notices, I'm not going to go through this next section in any detail. Just do read through it and you need to read through the administrative and national policy requirements. I'm not going to cover them here in the interests of time. You will receive a notification if you are recommended for funding, we notify folks. If you are not recommended for funding, we will notify folks.

And then - but the absolute official notification for award, if you are recommended for funding, that comes directly from our grants management division by our grants online system. So it's an email notification.

And again, that's not something you would see until late summer or well, yes, late summer.

All right. So I'm going to skip down again the next couple pages are about reporting requirements and so forth. I'm going to skip down to the last section, which you will care about in the near term, and that's Agency contacts. I think many of you have already figured out how to contact us but oed.grants@noaa.gov is our generic email address for reaching all four of us. All four of us who are listed and this SFO will be responding to your questions through that email account. We can all access it and it ensures that we can get as timely a response as possible. Please do be somewhat patient because we do expect to get a lot of questions and we may not be able to

answer it you know within a couple hours but we will definitely get back to you within a day or two.

All right. Finally, please take a look at our Web site and on the very final page there is a link which you've already gone to because you got this teleconference number. But that is of course, the place where your landing page for finding any additional information on this competition in addition to what's offered on grants.gov. And finally, Carrie mentioned that we will have another informational teleconference on January 5. We are transcribing this one and so you will have the notes from this call and you also have another opportunity to call in if you so desire.

So at this point, I think I'm going to stop and I'm going to ask the Operator to do whatever she needs to do to open the phone lines for questions.

Coordinator: Thank you. If you would like to ask a question on the phone lines, please press Star 1 and record your name when prompted. Once again, that's Star 1 and record your name. One moment for our first question.

(Sara Shedinger): Thank you.

Coordinator: And our first question comes from (Ward). Your line is open.

(Ward Eames): Hello. This is (Ward Eames) from NTC Research Foundation. We although we're heavily in environmental education and have not worked with NOAA before, so how do we find out the best way for NOAA to fit into our proposed project? Do we contact the regional office on where we're targeting? We typically we're talking about big-scale for multiple states. Or what title the person is in that regional office that we should be contacting to see what their involvement should be?

(Sara Shedinger): So that's a really good question. And we realize it can be often difficult to penetrate a large bureaucratic agency. So there are a couple sources of information for you. And we do list them in our SFO. I'm not going - maybe one of my colleagues can find the exact page it's on - but we have a Web site called NOAA in Your Backyard, okay?

So that's one source where you can find who is in your region. Who you might reach out to work with on your project.

If you go to the Resilience Asset page that Carrie mentioned in her - in the first part of this telecom, the Resilience Asset page has a link to definitely some assets that are NOAA-related, and Resilience-related, but in addition, there is a link on that page to what we call our NOAA Assets page and the NOAA Assets page goes into much greater detail of people and programs and offices. So I would say those would be the two places I would start. And that actually ends up being three Web sites, but and the NOAA in Your Backyard is on Page 9 of the - it's in the Definitions section actually, under NOAA Assets.

(Ward Eames): Great. Thank you. Let me ask another question. If we are submitting videos as part of this application on government grants.gov, is there any problem with that or is there an alternative way to get videos and/or deep artwork submitted?

(John): Yes. So the way the application materials will be downloaded from grants.gov and submitted to the review panel, does not make it possible to transmit video files? However, you can put a URL to the video within your application that would optionally allow reviewers to view that video if they so choose.

(Ward Eames): Great. Because those have to be on a separate FTP site or can you go to YouTube or are those blocked for NOAA?

(Sara Shedinger): YouTube is not blocked for NOAA anymore. It used to be. But it's not anymore.

(Ward Eames): All right. Last question. Overall, as you look at these we have not submitted before - overall as you look at these, is large scale more beneficial than smaller and deeper?

(Sara Shedinger): Not necessarily. We're not - we don't really reference one over the other. You know, in past years I would say prior to last year we definitely had an emphasis on regional to national scale projects and we were less likely to fund something that was highly localized. Because we recognize that the threat - environmental threats and

vulnerabilities communities are often very localized in how they need to be addressed, we do not prefer one range over another.

That doesn't mean you would - it would count against you. It's just not necessarily going to count for you. I hope that helps. Or I hope it at least addresses your question.

(Ward Eames): Yes. Thank you very much.

(Carrie McDougall): I want to chime in really quickly here. This is Carrie. I'm going to respond to all of your questions. So first of all to the one - your first question, NOAA partners are not required. So you don't have to have a NOAA partner. You have to have a NOAA asset but not necessarily a partner.

And for your second question, (John) mentioned this but I want to reiterate - the reviewers will not be asked to go to external Web sites that you include with your project descriptions. They will only be asked to review what is written and included in your project description. So if there is a really essential video or supplemental piece of information, you should probably describe that in your project description because that is what reviewers are going to be asked to review.

And then third, your question of scale, I would look at what we funded last year, which we have published on our Web site to get a sense of the range of scale of the projects we funded.

(Ward Eames): All right. Good. Thank you.

(Sara Shedinger): Okay. Next question?

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Gary). Sir, your line is open.

(Gary), your line is open.

(Gary): (Unintelligible).

(Sara Shedinger): We can barely hear you.

(Gary): Are you referring to (Gary) or (Larry)?

(John): (Gary) or (Larry)?

Coordinator: The person who is speaking right now is the person that we're going to have the question from.

(Gary): Well, I assume. In the section about PIs, this particular proposal said the PI had to be affiliated with the organization. And for this grant award is a consultant considered affiliated with the institution?

(Sara Shedinger): Sorry. We're scratching our head here. I'm not sure I can answer that today. I'd have to check on that. My immediate instinct is to say no, because you're a consultant - whoever is a consultant. And is not more of a permanent employee of that institution.

(Gary): Well, the 5013c - I represent (Earth K Texas). A number of what you would call employees are actually consultants. In fact, that one that's the CEO is a consultant.

(Sara Shedinger): Interesting. Okay. That's helpful information. We're going to have to think on that and post something on our FAQ page because I'm not sure.

(Gary): Okey-doke. Thank you.

(Sara Shedinger): Thank you.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Gerald). Sir, your line is open.

(Gerald Wagner): Good afternoon. This is (Gerald Wagner) from the Blackfeet Nation. I have two questions I guess. If we're not really - we're not located anywhere on the coast. If we don't fit in to that, and we haven't experienced hurricanes - although we do get 90

mile-an-hour gusts over here - are we still in the running for qualification or qualified to apply for the grant? We were looking at it more at the terms of educational expansion and information aspect of climate and climate change and climate adaptation.

(Sara Shedinger): So to answer your first part of your question, you - there is no specific emphasis on coastal resilience only. We are interested in funding projects that are affecting inland areas as well as coastal areas. So yes. From that aspect, you're definitely still fit for the competition.

In terms of your project idea, I would just point you to looking very carefully at the first section of the SFO that Carrie read through regarding project activities and our focus, because we really want projects to be focused on community resilience and the building the educational capacity within the community to become more resilient as a community. To understand what those threats and vulnerabilities - those environmental threats and vulnerabilities are and in your particular community, and to really be actively engaged in thinking about and trying to understand you know what do we need to do to try and mitigate for or adapt to these environmental threats and vulnerabilities.

(Gerald Wagner): All right. Thank you. That's kind of right in the direction we were headed. I guess the other question is would it be a plus or a minus if we're looking at teaming up with other native tribes here in the region?

(Sara Shedinger): I think if you - it's not one or the other. I certainly don't think - there's no reason I can think why it would hurt your project to team up with other Nations in the region. If it makes sense given the focus of your project, you know? If there's similar threats and vulnerabilities you're all facing, and your communities want to look at ways - or how they're going to address those and you know how the educational components that would go along with helping your communities become more resilient, I think that's perfectly fine.

(Gerald Wagner): All right. I was asking that because of the real commonality of stressors that we face out here in rural areas on reservations.

(Sara Shedinger): That seems very logical to me. So I can understand why you'd want to take that approach.

(Gerald Wagner): All right, thank you.

(Sara Shedinger): Mm-hmm, you're welcome. Next question.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Kathryn). Your line is open.

(Kathryn Reese): Hi. This is (Kathryn Reese) from UCLA. My question has to do with the appropriate audience for the educational programs that you'll be developing.

The new media; whether in newspapers or TV new media outlets are an important mediator or public knowledge about resiliency issues. And so I'm wondering if an educational program that would target members of the news media would be considered appropriate under this call?

Carrie McDougall: I think that would fall into the professional category. And although I do see how you - we've had questions of this nature for the last year as well, and I do think it's a little bit of a gray area. It's a bit ambiguous, but we're really seeking projects that target either K-12 students or the broader public when they're serving in their public capacity, not when they're serving in a professional capacity.

And so I think by targeting journalists, you would be essentially targeting people who are operating in their professional capacity. And that's sort of how we try to distinguish those - the broader public aspect of this - the target audience. Does that make sense?

(Kathryn Reese): It does. Okay, thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Mm-hmm.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Michelle). Ma'am, your line is open.

(Michelle White): (Michelle White) from Arizona State University. I'm just curious if a project that explores the broader public knowledge on an extreme event itself would qualify? Or should the focus be more on environmental and/or geographical and earth systems components that enable that extreme event?

(John): So - this is (John). One thing I want to highlight is that while we're looking at the resilient (unintelligible) as a threat, and so you do need to delve into the earth system applications of that event.

We aren't really looking for projects that focus on the resilience. So just focusing on the event itself or just on the phenomena itself would not really be an applicable focus for one of these projects.

(Michelle White): Okay, thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Derek. Sir, your line is open.

Derek Esibill: Hello, this is Derek Esibill from Pacific American Foundation, and my question is just an eligibility question.

If we're applying for a (unintelligible) grant also, does that negate us from this particular grant?

(Sara Shedinger): No, it does not. The one thing I would - we would look at, of course you should - that should show up on your current and pending support. And just be aware of that.

Derek Esibill: Right.

(Sara Shedinger): We would be contacting the Program Officer who we know very well, that runs that program to make sure that we don't have any overlap between the two projects. Of if we do, it's synergistic and not duplicative.

Derek Esibill: Roger that. Thank you very much.

(Sara Shedinger): You're welcome.

Coordinator: And the next question comes from Joel. Your line is open.

Joel Gerwein: Hi, this is Joel Gerwein from the California State Coastal Conservancy. My question is, we're working with a couple of different regional groups on adaptation planning to sea level rise in particular.

And so my question is, whether it would be better, in your opinion, to do one application that would involve the parallel outreach and educational projects in multiple regions? Or whether it would be better to have those regions submit separate applications for funding focused just on their own effort?

Carrie McDougall: I think that one of the things that we were going to hit on the closing remarks is, how competitive this funding opportunity is. Last year we reviewed 145 applications and funded six.

So given those odds, from that standpoint, I would say, better to put them together.

However, the projects that are funded end up being the ones that are most highly tied together and very understandable and really, they (unintelligible) when you read through the rationale.

So if you find you're struggling with weaving a story together about how those regions are working together, then maybe it's not - maybe you want to go the other way. Or maybe you want to focus on a subset that have more of a commonality in

terms of the approach you're going to use or in this case, it sounds like you're addressing a singular threat.

But we really emphasize that the reviewers need to be looking for a highly logical and well justified need and rational for the project.

Joel Gerwein: Okay, that makes sense. It sounds like if we're trying to describe just bundling different projects that have only in common, that they're working on to (unintelligible) education and outreach in different regions, it's not - it wouldn't really work so well.

But if they were taking a very common approach that lends itself to a story - single story, then it would.

Carrie McDougall: I think so, based on obviously, the limited information that I have about what you're doing.

Joel Gerwein: Okay.

Coordinator: Are you ready for the next question?

(Sara Shedinger): Yes.

Coordinator: The next question comes from (Laila). Your line is open.

(Leah): Hi, did you mean (Leah)?

(Sara Shedinger): Yes.

(John): Yes.

(Leah): Hi. Actually she just answered my questions of how many applicants were there last year. One hundred and fifty-five; is that correct?

(Sara Shedinger): Well actually there were 145 projects that were reviewed, but we received 187 applications.

(Leah): Wow.

(Sara Shedinger): Some of those were disqualified. Some others were withdrawn. And in the end we funded six awards.

(John): And some of those applications were part of the collaborative project that (unintelligible) count towards the 145 projects.

(Leah): Okay, thank you.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Joyce). Your line is open.

(Joyce): Yes, since how you all emphasize community resilience, I was wondering if you were looking us to incorporate emergency preparedness and emergency management in our projects.

Carrie McDougall: I mean I think that that might be appropriate. Again given the approach you're going to take.

So we do have links on that resilience asset to some of the government assets that help people be prepared into FEMA. And so we definitely see that as part of the mix.

I wouldn't say that the people who are working to prepare should be part of the target audience because that would fall into the professional area that we don't really seek to fund.

But having those folks who work on preparation as partners might every well make sense. It's depending on the type of projects you're planning.

However I will say that one of the things that distinguishes this program from some of the other programs I mentioned earlier that NOAA funds in resilience, is we're not actually taking projects that for example where kids go out and are actually physically building, you know, resilience infrastructure or doing hands-on projects like that.

We're really looking for something a bit upstream where an education foundation is being built within students or the public so that they have a foundational understanding that is scientifically based, about the threats and vulnerabilities and what it means to be resilient.

(Joyce): And my next question is, for the PIs and co-PIs, are you looking for them to have PhDs in a certain scientific area?

(Sara Shedinger): No, not necessarily. It's not limited to people with PhDs in a scientific area. I would say, because we do want projects to have a solid grounding in the, you know, accepted evidence for whatever the environmental threat is, we recommend that you have folks with relevant scientific credentials involved in the project somehow.

They don't have to be the PI. And the flip side is that, as Carrie indicated you know, at the very beginning of her description of our project activities and program objectives, it really - this is - we are expecting that there would be multidisciplinary teams that are tackling these projects.

Because we're - it's not just understanding the science, it's also understanding, you know, how the threats and vulnerabilities are affecting the economy, and how they're affecting the social structure and the culture of the community as well.

(Joyce): Okay, thank you.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Joyce). Your line is open.

(Joyce): Hi, this is (Joyce) from the Detroit Zoological Society, and (Joyce)'s think alike. You answered the question about emergency preparedness. I was going to ask that.

We work with young people around a lot of issues, including things such as we're here in the Great Lakes Wildlife Conservation Habitat Restoration. But we are also a storm-ready institution and we are, you know, deal with issues of water conservation, climate change in our - you know, in our exhibits and education programs.

So I guess my question is, can a program incorporate several areas of resiliency? Could like resiliency be focused around a community resilience as in emergency preparedness and readiness, as well as, conservation and habitat restoration?

And Part 2 of the question is, can youth employment or internships such that young people engaged in this - the K through 12 youth engaged in this be, like high school youth that are engaged in a summer work experience or an internship of some kind?

(Sara Shedinger): So to address your first question about, can multiple threats and areas needed where resilience is needed be incorporated into your project; yes. You do not have to simply focus on one environment threat or vulnerability. You can focus on multiples.

You can again, and you can focus - it can be in one community or it can be in multiple communities. So we give you all a wide range of options of how you want to scale and scope your project.

To answer your question about youth employment as an activity or component of your project, there's nothing that prohibits that from being a piece of it at all.

(Joyce): Thank you.

(John): And just - I did hear I think, a third component to your question which was about whether it would - a project could focus on responding to disaster or whether it could also be focused on reducing the vulnerability?

And I do want to say that our definition of resilience does include preventing a disruption. So you can also - you can certainly have a component focused on how to respond when a threat happens. And you can also have a component focused on reducing or mitigating that threat.

(Joyce): Oh, thank you.

(Sara Shedinger): Okay.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Rick). Sir, your line is open.

(Rick): Thank you. I wanted to revisit the response that came from the news media question. It confused me about the professional language.

So the response I heard was, you couldn't target - probably not target news media because they are acting as a professional. And when I saw the language in the FFO, I understood it to be a resiliency professional that was excluded.

So did I hear that when targeting the public, you can't target the public when they're acting as a city administrator or a banker? Is that what I heard?

(Sara Shedinger): So yes, I wouldn't put a - city administrators often are people who are involved in having to make decisions about resilience for their particular community. So I'm not sure that I would say, in that particular case, it falls outside of their duties, although it may not be their sole focus. A banker would be a different matter.

We're not - the approaches that we're anticipating are not trying to reach people through their professions. It's reaching them as - essentially as private citizens or members of society through informal education and public engagement.

So, again as -- I think Carrie answered this question before -- but it is a gray area. It's not cut and dry. But we tended to shy away from proposals that came in last year that really focused on trying to educate folks in their professional capacity.

(Rick): Yes. So well, this is a good response. I was thinking of trying to address multiple towns in a geographic area through their business community so, multiple members of Chamber of Commerce. But that would be in their professional capacity.

(Sara Shedinger): Not really. Again, that's an interesting question you pose. That kind of feels like that's on the fringes of what we're trying to do.

(Rick): Okay.

(Sara Shedinger): And I'm just also thinking about the kinds of projects that we funded this year doesn't mean those individuals wouldn't be engaged in some of the activities. In fact I would hope they would be.

There are community conversations that are happening at public libraries and through convenings that are happening through informal science education institutions. And I would hope that those folks would be included in those audiences and participating. They wouldn't necessarily be a sole target.

(Rick): Got you.

Carrie McDougall: Yes, I think that that's the important distinction, is if you look at projects we funded last year, you will see some of those folks are included, but in a much broader set of audience members. And that was the reference to if the public (unintelligible) expect there to be representatives from multiple sectors of society. But again, more in their public capacity or their citizen capacity.

And to have a project that's solely focused on those types of people; those people operating in that capacity, is not what we're seeking. We're seeking these broader projects that serve a broader set of citizens.

But this Q&A is always so valuable for us because we take these questions that you ask us and we - I just went and wrote a note down on the current funding announcement that we need to improve this language and really think about it.

So this Q&A serves to inform us as to where the community is and the kinds of projects you're thinking about. And so we might change the wording a little bit next year to include or be clearer on what we want. So thank you for pushing us to really be concise.

(Rick): Always pride myself in asking good questions. Here's one that's not quite so good.

You pointed to last year's funding which was -- I haven't gone to the Web site to look -- is from what I've heard, six awards. Is it worthwhile looking at previous year's fundings as well?

Carrie McDougall: Not really. No, I would focus on last years.

(Rick): Okay, thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Mm-hmm.

(John): I would add to Carrie's answer, look at last year's awards for models of awards this year. I would still say that there's value in looking at previous awards to see materials and findings that have been developed that you could possibly integrate into your project.

(Rick): Good point. Thanks again.

(Sara Shedinger): All right, next question.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Denise). Ma'am your line is open.

(Denise): Hi everybody. Thank you so much for making this informational session available.

I currently work for a non-profit that has received a NOAA grant to build resiliency with Alaska Native Coastal Community. And we were wondering if we applied for this grant to fulfill goals or missions within this particular grant that are in line with the current grant but will not replicate the work that we're doing currently with another NOAA grant, whether that would count against us.

Or if you had any recommendations in the application of like how much to include about the current grant that we received from NOAA.

(Sara Shedinger): So there is - you're not (unintelligible) applying, and it's not necessarily going to count against you. It really comes down to how well you justify the need for the funding and how well you describe - how you're going to leverage the investment that has already been made by our agency in your communities.

And you know, basically selling, you know, what's the bang for the buck that we're getting out of it. Because as you can tell from the numbers I recited earlier, it's going to be highly competitive.

(Denise): Mm-hmm.

(Sara Shedinger): But you're not excluded from being able to apply; certainly.

(Denise): Okay.

Carrie McDougall: And in fact you may find you have a leg up because you already have probably the NOAA asset and the NOAA partner. You want to just make that case as to how you're now applying for in this funding opportunity, is really distinct and not being supported by the other program.

(Denise): Okay.

(Sara Shedinger): All right.

(Denise): Yes, thank you for your response.

(Sara Shedinger): Oh, you're welcome. Next question.

Coordinator: Thank you. And our next question comes from (Sarah Singer). Your line is open.

(Sarah Singer): Hi. I was just curious if you have any resources to share, you know, whether it's on the FAQs or on your Web site, for those who are looking for external evaluators and don't really know where to go to look for one.

(Sara Shedinger): I don't think...

Carrie McDougall: Does the AEA has resources like that?

(Sara Shedinger): You know, I don't know. (Christopher)?

Carrie McDougall: He's going to be muted.

Man: (Unintelligible) muted.

(Sara Shedinger): We'll have to get back to you on that. That's - we don't currently have anything listed to point you to evaluators. The American Evaluation Association is I would think, a place where you could go to try and identify folks. But we'll have to look into that. It's a good question.

(Sarah Singer): Okay.

(Sara Shedinger): Depending on where you're located, often you know, your local universities will have folks who are trained in this area and able to help. And there are a number of firms out there that if you Google, education evaluation or environmental education evaluation or the like, you would probably pull a lot of them up.

(Sarah Singer): Okay, no that's great. That's helpful. Thank you.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Vicky Church). Your line is open. Thank you very much. Hi, I work for an organization that does climate change education, but particularly behavior modification to mitigate climate change.

And I just wondered if that would fall under the resiliency component of what you're requesting in this grant application?

Carrie McDougall: What was the type of mitigation you described?

(Vicky Church): Well we do climate change education. And then we concentrate on behavior modifications...

Carrie McDougall: Behavior modifications. Okay, that was the part I didn't get. Okay, so I mean last year what we found in our lots of applications that we reviewed was there were many, very, very strong applications that were more on the climate change literacy; climate change education side of the house I would say.

And they didn't fully take their project into how they were going to have the folks really focus on resilience. And that was a weakness. Those projects did not review well, even though they were solid projects if we had solicited just straight up climate change education projects.

So I think that your project could be. Obviously I don't know enough about it. But read again what we mean by resilience. And that first paragraph under description of project activities, read that and think about your project and think, am I doing this. Or you know, could our project be modified to do these things.

And again, reading the definition for resilience that we have and thinking about active engagement and those kinds of characteristics that we're stressing.

(Vicky Church): Is that the main issue that you're trying to address is resiliency? Or are there a number that you have to address along the way? Because what we're doing is behavior modification that you can do at home. You know, things that are simple measures that you can take to reduce climate change.

Carrie McDougall: I would - in the way you're describing that right now, I would say that does not sound like what we're seeking. I mean what we're looking for is for you to look at - first of all, identify a community, look at that community. Do they have an existing plan at the city, local, county or state level for resilience?

And what are the components of that plan and how might you get people there educated about the threats and vulnerabilities that face their community? And how they might become more resilient to them.

(Vicky Church): Okay.

(Sara Shedinger): Which might...

Carrie McDougall: Does that make sense?

(Sara Shedinger): It may involve individual actions, but it should be grounded and connected to, and not necessarily limited to individual actions that you just do in your home. If that helps.

(Vicky Church): It's not limited to that. I see what you're saying. Okay. And it's more of an adaptation kind of a situation it sounds like.

(Sara Shedinger): Well it could be both. And if it - and really I think Carrie's - part of her answer really to the - take a look at your - the Community Resilience Plans. That's the generic term we're using. But whatever the hazard - mitigation and adaptation plans are, and they're going to be different for different communities that really should help ground the approaches that you're going to take and the solutions that you're going to seek.

(John): Yes, this is (John). Ad Carrier referenced the - our definition of resilience, which I had referenced in a previous question where I did say, (unintelligible) was a component of resilience.

But it's prevent, withstand, respond to, recover, and recover from a disruption. Just note that's an, and not an, or.

(Vicky Church): I see.

(John): so our definition of resilience really encompasses all those. So just focusing on one without the other appropriate mechanisms would not really be sufficient for resilience.

(Vicky Church): I see. Very good. Okay, thank you very much.

Coordinator: And that was out last question.

(Sara Shedinger): All right. Actually we have a question for you. Could you tell us how many people were on this call today at the peak?

Coordinator: One hundred and eighty-eight. And actually another question did just come in.

(Sara Shedinger): Oh, okay.

Coordinator: (Joyce), your line is open.

(Joyce): Yes, if you find that your city or county already has a resilience plan, in what way are you looking for this project to expand what they're already doing?

Carrie McDougall: Well it would obviously be specific to your project in your community. But the first step would be that we would like you to tell us that you looked for a plan and you found one. And you know, give maybe a brief summary of it. That's the first thing

we'd like to see in your project description to show that you are looking into that area.

And then you know, in some cases, depending on the way the plan is structured, it may be very obvious how you can incorporate the plan. And work with other people who are working to implement the plan. And in other cases it may be not as obvious.

And so we recognize that there's quite a variety of these plans out there and that some are going to be much more easy to see how they incorporate into education, and some are not.

But we really, at this point, are stressing you to tell us that you did your homework. You looked into them. Here's what you found. And you - if there's appropriate individuals to contact who are implementing those plans, you have talked to them and discussed if there is any connection to education. And we hope that there is. And then that's what you would build into it.

(Joyce): Okay, thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Mm-hmm.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from Forbes. Your line is open.

Forbes Tompkins: Hi, this is Forbes Tompkins from the World Resources Institute. I'm curious whether a project that we've been undertaking for about three years now, focusing on local climate impact; our primary audience has been local elected officials like mayors from small towns and also a bipartisan group, as well.

And we recently worked with NOAA Administrator Kathy Sullivan and also Billy Sweet to host an event in New Hampshire related to sea level rise and coastal resilience that had local elected official representation from 18 of the 23 coastal states.

I was curious if we - if that could be a component of an application? And also using that to build a network because the presentations that were featured at that event were from Billy Sweet, about the impacts and needs for resilient climate change, also featuring the Climate Resiliency toolkits which we worked with the NCA folks, the US GCRP. And whether that would fall under this grant.

Carrie McDougall: I mean that's the kind of thing where it sounds like you're definitely dealing with resilience in the way that we mean resilience.

Obviously your target audience for your previous work is outside of the scope of the particular funding opportunity. But maybe through partnerships with folks who do work with the target audiences that we've specified, you could find some sort of hybrid component that might be able to leverage what you've done, working with local city officials to bring it into the K-12 or the - to the broader public.

And maybe there could be a component where you have an event like you had in your previous work. But I wouldn't think that you would be able to take exactly what you just described, and apply it to this particular funding, without any modification of target audience.

Forbes Tompkins: Sure, okay. Thank you. And that would also tie into - I think I failed to mention that we would be looking to build the network with the local elected officials who would then arrange for community events of where these educational tools on resilience and information on climate - extreme weather events, and those like to be a follow-up.

So say town halls or other local venues where the public; their constituents and the public at large could be then educated?

And we're pursuing a national Environmental Literacy Foundation to kind of partner with.

So before we went down that road with them, I just wanted to make sure that we were at least somewhere within the scope of this grant.

Carrie McDougall: I think as long as you're - truly your target audience is K-12 students or the broader public, and they aren't sort of a secondary audience that would be a note of caution from what you're saying.

Forbes Tompkins: Okay, great. Thank you.

Carrie McDougall: Mm-hmm.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (U.D). Your line is open, sir. (U.D.), please unmute your mic so we can hear you.

(U.D.): Can you hear me?

(Sara Shedinger): Yes.

(U.D.): Yes, hi. I have a question. In the proposal we have, environmental literacy for communities and K-12 students. So would you like to see combined communities and students, or proposal can target just communities or just students? Because it's kind of hard to put together communities and students.

(Sara Shedinger): Go ahead (John).

(John): So we had the public and/or K-12 students. So we just highlight that that is an, and, or. So it can be both or it can be one or the other. It does not need to - it does not require to be both. Does that answer your question?

(U.D.): Yes, yes I think so. But if you link communities and students, that would raise the value of proposal.

(Sara Shedinger): Yes I mean ultimately we hope that students, as members of their community are, you know, by helping them understand how to make their community more resilient,

they are actively engaging them in that process. That they are - I mean they are members of our communities.

And an example I'll give you is, you know, if you've got - you're engaging K-12 students in a project, the idea is that ultimately through the activities they're involved in, they get the intention of other members of the community to, you know, either develop or revise or somehow enhance their community resilience plan.

You know that could be an outcome of a project. That's an example. It's not that it has to be that way.

We funded another project last year with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute that actually does target both members of the community and 5th and 6th graders. And they're not targeting them together, but they're developing the same tools and interface for engaging them and exploring different scenarios related to sea-level rise.

And so they're applying essentially the same interactive interface and the tools embedded in it, with these two audiences, but not simultaneously.

(U.D.): I see, I see. Okay, thank you. Thanks very clear. Another question is, like emergency plans and management plans which you mentioned in the proposal, should we use the ones which are posted by government, like Offices of Emergency Management.

Or you refer to the reports by like - scientific reports that are different group of scientists who, you know, publish papers, publish reports. So like which management - emergency management plan we should use or incorporate?

(Sara Shedinger): So I'm not an expert in where to find all of the emergency management and adaptation plans. But my understanding is that you would be finding those through state or local municipal links and (unintelligible) sources.

(U.D.): Okay.

(Sara Shedinger): the scientific papers and the scientific basis for understanding the problem are certainly important. I don't want to diminish that. You know on the climate change front, if you're looking at things like the National Climate Assessment; that can be very informative.

But the actual mitigation and adaptation plan are often - those are government documents, really.

(U.D.): Okay, governmental documents. Okay. Okay, and last question I think I have is about PhD students - support for PhD students. If we anticipate like a big analytical work, that proposal - you know, can proposal include PhD support? And is it, you know, a favorable thing or something that no, no?

(Sara Shedinger): There certainly may include PhD students if you're - to help you conduct your analytical work. As long as they're qualified to do the work, there's nothing that precludes that. I'd view it no differently than hiring a consultant to do that work. So either way, it's whatever makes sense for your project team.

(U.D.): Okay.

Carrie McDougall: However, this isn't a research funding opportunity. And so if we start seeing, you know, a larger portion of the budget going towards research type activities that can be problematic.

We want to see the majority of the funds supporting the implementation of education.

(U.D.): I see. Okay, and that's very good. Thank you so much.

Carrie McDougall: Mm-hmm.

(U.D.): Thank you.

(Sara Shedinger): Bye-bye.

(U.D.): Thank you. Bye.

(Sara Shedinger): Next question.

Coordinator: That was our last question.

(Sara Shedinger): Okay. What time are we at? Oh we are at 5:00; okay. Well I think we're going to just make a few concluding remarks and then we'll get off the line here.

So I would hope by now you all recognize that we think reading the FFO; the Federal Funding Opportunity Announcement, very thoroughly is very important. And as well as going to the online resources that we link you too through that announcement, including our frequently asked questions page.

We do expect this to be a similarly competitive competition. And so with only about 4% of the project deemed funded, just be aware of that going into this.

If you have any additional questions after this teleconference and after reading the FFO thoroughly, if you can't find the answer on the FAQ page, please reach out to us through OED Grants - oed.grants@NOAA.gov. And we will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.

As I mentioned earlier in the call, we have multiple people that will be checking that on a multiple times a day or the course of this competition. Carrie, do you have anything else that you want to add before we sign off?

Carrie McDougall: No, just good luck to any of you who decide to pursue it.

(Sara Shedinger): Yes, good luck. All right, thank you very much. I'm going to sign off now.

Carrie McDougall: Bye-bye.

Coordinator: This concludes today's conference. All participants may now disconnect. Thank you.

END