

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Recruiting, Training and Research Program (RTRP)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-SE-2011-2002863

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.455, Cooperative Science and Education Program

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, March 15, 2011. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

For applications submitted through grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy submissions will be dated and time stamped when they are received in the NMFS office. Hard copy applications arriving after the closing dates given above will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service that guaranteed delivery prior to the specified closing date and time; in any event, hard copy applications received by the NSGO later than two business days following the closing date will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Population Dynamics Recruiting, Training, and Research Program goal is to benefit fisheries-related science by continuing the long term process of recruiting students into the discipline of population dynamics (recruiting), adapting modern pedagogical advances into the university marine resources classroom (training), and advancing research on marine resources population dynamics (research). This program addresses NOAA's mission goal to "Protect, Restore, and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources through an Ecosystem Approach to Management."

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Recruiting, Training, and Research (RTR) Program provides opportunity to support through grants and cooperative agreements, enduring partnerships between the Federal government and institutions of research and higher education in the southeastern region of the United States and Caribbean, for cooperative science and education on marine issues, especially living marine resources and their habitat, that confront local, regional, and national resources managers; also, to award grants and cooperative agreements to develop innovative approaches and methods for marine and estuarine science and education. The authorizing statute for the Cooperative Science and Education Program is 16 U.S.C 753a.

For the purposes of this solicitation, the southeastern region of the United States is defined as the states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Texas. The Caribbean is defined as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

B. Program Priorities

The main premise for a RTR program is to partner with a university to help recruit and train students and conduct research in the disciplines of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics. A recent report to Congress (U.S. Departments of Commerce and Education. 2008. The shortage in the number of individuals with post-baccalaureate degrees in subjects related to fishery science. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-F/SPO-91) indicated that a shortage exists in the number of fishery scientists entering careers in this discipline. The report to Congress can be found at: http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/report_congress/ShortageOfDegrees.pdf. Three main causes of the shortage were identified: (1) Insufficient numbers of faculty members specializing in the discipline of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics, (2) Insufficient numbers of graduate students specializing in the discipline, and (3) Inadequate quality (i.e. aptitude and abilities) of incoming graduate students entering the discipline with regard to quantitative skills.

The program's priority is to reduce the shortage of fishery scientists entering careers in the disciplines of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics by addressing all three of the causes identified above. In preparing their proposal, each institution of higher education should also carefully consider the following: (1) Existing NOAA programs designed to address the causes as well as gaps that could be addressed to a greater extent, (2) Current methods of the existing RTR project that have been successfully

addressing causes of the shortage, and (3) The unique strengths of the institution that can be harnessed to increase the supply of fishery scientists entering careers in this discipline.

Historically the RTR program has focused on the following: (1) Recruiting outstanding undergraduate students selected from colleges and universities across the country into the disciplines of marine resources population dynamics and stock assessment; (2) Training students to conduct stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics work and research adapting modern pedagogical advances into the university marine resources classroom. The students have come from two groups: (a) outstanding undergraduate students selected from colleges and universities across the country and (b) graduate students at the university home to the RTR program, and (3) Conducting research on applied stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics issues relevant to federal waters in the southeastern U.S.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the RTR program is provided by the following: 16 U.S.C 753a.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

An annual amount of \$250,000 may be available in fiscal year (FY) 2011. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon FY 2011 Congressional appropriations. The NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center anticipates awarding one project for \$250,000 for year one; \$300,000 for year two and \$350,000 each for years three through five for a total of \$1,600,000 for five years. The project proposal accepted for funding does not have to compete for the additional years of funding. However, funding for the additional years is contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance and is at the sole discretion of the agency. Publication of this notice does not obligate NMFS to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or any of the available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

The period of awards may be for a maximum period of 5 years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposal selected for funding will be funded through a cooperative agreement. NMFS will be substantially involved in the RTR program and shares responsibility for management, direction, and performance of the project with the recipient. NMFS will work with the institution of higher education to design, implement, and evaluate all recruiting, training, and research components of the program. As part of this, the agency will provide guidance as

to how to make the institution's proposal operational and how to adapt it over time to increase its effectiveness at meeting the program's goals.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be institutions of higher education offering doctoral degrees in a subject relevant to stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible. Foreign governments, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, and international organizations are excluded for purposes of this solicitation since the objective of the RTR program is to optimize research and development benefits from U.S. marine fishery resources.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost-sharing is not required for this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

All applicants must demonstrate that sufficient office space is available for graduate students working on this program and provide facilities to conduct marine ecology and marine fisheries field research.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available through grants.gov. If applicants do not have internet access, applications may be requested from: National Marine Fisheries Service, State/Federal Liaison Branch, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Format Requirements:

All pages must be single-spaced and should be composed in at least a 12-point font with one-inch margins on 8 1/2 x 11 paper. The project description may not exceed 13 pages, exclusive of title page, project synopsis, literature cited, budget information, resumes of investigator, and letters of support (if any). Failure to follow the requirements will result in the rejection of the application and subsequent return.

Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out.

2. Content Requirements:

The following information must be included. Failure to follow the content requirements will result in the rejection of the application and subsequent return.

a. Signed Title Page: The title page (SF-424) must be signed by the authorized representative. Electronic signatures submitted through grants.gov satisfy this requirement.

b. Project Synopsis (1-page limit): It is critical that the project synopsis accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the activities. It is imperative that potential applicants tie their proposals to all of the program priorities described in Section I.B.

c. Existing Program Description (7-page limit): The applicant should describe and justify existing programs as it relates to the Funding Opportunity Description. Existing program description must include the following:

- A presentation of the university's current approach to addressing the shortage of fishery scientists entering the disciplines of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics. This should include a description of the university's current approach to recruiting and training students for this discipline.

- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the current approach.

- A list of recent and ongoing research projects for graduate students that provide excellent training and experience for the students and relevant and needed work in the disciplines of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics for NOAA in the Southeastern U.S.

- Presenting whether or not each of the following courses exist in the university's graduate catalog and for each, the frequency that it has been offered in recent years on the campus being proposed for the RTR Unit:

- Population dynamics

- Fish ecology

- Multivariate statistics

- Sampling theory

- Fisheries or natural resource modeling

- Bayesian statistics
- Stock assessment
- Risk and decision analysis
- Fisheries or natural resource computer programming
- The extent to which the topics of natural resources policy, fisheries management, and human dimensions of fisheries are covered in the university's graduate coursework.
- Evidence of a close working relationship between faculty from the stock assessment / marine resources population dynamics disciplines and faculty from the statistics, biostatistics, and/or biomathematics disciplines. Evidence may include but is not limited to:
 - Serving as Co-Principal Investigators and Co-Authors on research projects
 - Serving together on graduate students' supervisory committees and co-supervising graduate students
 - Developing common seminar series
 - Developing relevant joint major, minor, and/or certificate programs
 - Co-teaching relevant courses
- The university's experience in and availability to assist with setting up the logistics of complex programs (e.g. workshops, summer programs) involving students and instructors from multiple institutions off-campus. This would include the following:
 - Marketing the program to colleges and universities nationwide.
 - Processing application forms
 - Reserving classroom space
 - Reserving lodging and making meal arrangements
 - Reserving travel (e.g. airlines and rental cars)
 - Attending programs with faculty to handle off-campus logistics and resolve unexpected problems

d. Project Description (13-page limit): The applicant should describe and justify the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described below in Section V. Project descriptions should include clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving those objectives, including methods, timelines, and expected outcomes to include

but not limited to the following:

- A presentation of the university's proposed approach to addressing the shortage of fishery scientists entering the discipline of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics.

- A description of how the university's proposed approach would address the three main causes of the shortage of fishery scientists in the discipline as identified in the Congressional Report referenced above.

- A description of how the university's proposed approach complements and fills gaps in existing programs identified in Chapter 5 of the Congressional report (U.S. Departments of Commerce and Education. 2008. The shortage in the number of individuals with post-baccalaureate degrees in subjects related to fishery science. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-F/SPO-91) to address the shortage of fishery scientists in the disciplines.

- A list of potential collaborative research projects for graduate students in the program that will provide excellent training and experience for the students and relevant and needed work for in the Southeastern U.S.

- Access to sufficient administrative assistance for the program.

- Access to sufficient workshop logistical help for the program.

e. Literature Cited: If applicable.

f. Budget and Budget Justification: There should be a detailed budget justification accompanying the SF-424 budget forms. Provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested.

g. Resumes (5 pages maximum for each major participant). Participants must include qualifications or evidence based on the following:

- Individual's experience in teaching and conducting research in the fields of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics.

- Individual's experience in teaching and conducting research in statistics, biostatistics, and/or biomathematics with a particular focus on fisheries and natural resource management.

- Individual's experience in creating or adopting modern, cutting edge pedagogical methods to undergraduate and/or graduate teaching including relevant evaluations by peers and/or students.

h. Standard Application Forms: Please refer to the appropriate application package available through www.grants.gov .

i. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, applicants are required to answer the following questions:

1. Has any National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or other environmental compliance documentation (e.g., Endangered Species Act Biological Opinion; Letter of Concurrence or Biological Assessment/Evaluation; Clean Water Act permit; State Historic Preservation Officer consultation; state environmental compliance documentation (mini-NEPA); etc.) been completed? If yes, list the environmental compliance documentation that has been completed and provide copies of the documentation as appropriate.

2. Would the proposed activity or environmental impacts of the activity be subject to public controversy? If yes, describe the potential controversy.

3. Would the proposed activity have potential environmental impacts that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks? If yes, describe the impacts that are uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

4. Is the proposed activity related to other activities (both NOAA and non-NOAA that together may cumulatively adversely impact the environment? For example, the proposed activity is one of a series of projects that together may cause a change in the pattern of pollutant discharge, traffic generation, economic change, flood plain change, or land use. If yes, briefly describe the other activities and discuss how the related projects would have cumulative impacts on the environment.

5. Would the proposed activity involve a non-native species? If yes, describe how the non-native species is involved.

6. Would the proposed activity occur within a unique geographic area of notable recreational, ecological, scientific, cultural, historical, scenic or aesthetic importance? If yes, describe the area, including the name or designation if known.

7. Would the proposed activity affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources? If yes, describe the impact.

8. Would the proposed activity affect public health or safety? The effects may be adverse or beneficial and temporary, long-term, or permanent. If yes, describe the effects and

the circumstances that would cause these impacts.

9. Would the proposed activity affect directly or indirectly, in an adverse or beneficial manner, any listed endangered, threatened, or otherwise protected species or their critical habitat under federal and state laws including the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act? If yes, name the species and/or habitat that will be impacted and describe the circumstances that would impact the species and/or habitat.

Applications must identify the principal participants, and include copies of any agreements describing the specific tasks to be performed by participants. Project applications should give a clear presentation of the proposed work, the methods for carrying out the project, its relevance to managing and enhancing the use of Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and/or U.S. Caribbean fishery resources, and cost estimates as they relate to specific aspects of the project. Budgets must include a detailed breakdown, by category of expenditures, with appropriate justification for both the Federal and non-Federal shares.

Applications should exhibit familiarity with related work that is completed or ongoing. Proposals should state whether the research applies to the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, U.S. Caribbean, or North Atlantic for highly migratory species or multiple areas. Successful applicants are required to collect and manage data in accordance with standardized procedures and format approved or specified by NMFS and to participate with NMFS in specific cooperative activities that are determined by consultations between NMFS and successful applicants before project grants are awarded. All data collected as part of an awarded grant must be provided to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, March 15, 2011. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

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will not be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOCs are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.htm> .

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs - If the applicant does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency, then they may direct cost all charges, or submit a request to establish a rate. The Federal share of indirect costs awarded will not exceed 25 percent of the total direct costs identified on NOAA Form 424A Budget Information. The indirect rate is fixed at 25 percent in order to maximize the funds available for the program and to allow applicants to recover a reasonable indirect cost.

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

F. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in "Submission Dates and Times" above to help ensure your application is received on time.

Applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov unless an applicant does not have internet access. In that case, hard copies with original signatures may be sent to: National Marine Fisheries Service, State/Federal Liaison Branch, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

A review panel will assign scores to the applications based on the following criteria with the points shown in parentheses;

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (15 points):

This criterion ascertains whether there is value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this program, does the applicant include:

- An explanation of how the proposed approach will address the shortage of scientists entering the disciplines of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics identified in the recent report to Congress (10 points).

- An explanation of how the potential research projects identified will provide benefits to NOAA's mission in the Southeastern U.S. (5 points).

2. Technical/scientific merit (30 points):

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For this program, does the applicant include:

- A presentation of the university's proposed approach to addressing the shortage of fishery scientists entering the disciplines of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics. This should include: (1) a description of how the university's proposed approach would address the three main causes of the shortage of fishery scientists in the disciplines as identified in the Congressional Report referenced above and (2) a description of how the university's proposed approach complements and fills gaps in RTRP existing objectives, to address the shortage of fishery scientists in the disciplines (15 points).

- A presentation of the university's proposed approach to providing an excellent education and training for the RTR Program's students (10 points).

- A list of potential collaborative research projects for graduate students in the program that will provide relevant work needed for NOAA's mission in the Southeastern U.S. (5 points).

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (40 points):

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For this program, does the applicant include:

- Individuals with experience teaching and conducting research and in the field of stock assessment and marine resources population dynamics (8 points).

- Individuals with experience teaching and conducting research in statistics, biostatistics, and/or biomathematics with a particular focus on fisheries and/or natural resource

management (8 points).

- Individuals with experience creating or adopting modern, cutting edge pedagogical methods to undergraduate and graduate teaching (5 points).

- Evidence of the University having a history of addressing the shortage of scientists in the disciplines of stock assessments and marine resources population dynamics (5 points).

- Evidence of whether or not each of the following courses exist in the university's graduate catalog and for each, the frequency that it has been offered in recent years on the campus being proposed for the RTR Program (10 points):

- Population dynamics

- Fish ecology

- Multivariate statistics

- Sampling theory

- Fisheries or natural resource modeling

- Bayesian statistics

- Stock assessment

- Risk and decision analysis

- Fisheries or natural resource computer programming

- Experience in and availability to assist with setting up the logistics of complex programs (e.g. workshops, summer programs) involving students and instructors from multiple institutions off-campus (e.g. marketing the program to colleges and universities nationwide, processing application forms, reserving classroom space, reserving lodging and making meal arrangements, reserving travel, attending programs to handle off-campus logistics and resolve unexpected problems (4 points).

4. Project costs (13 points):

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. For this program, this includes:

- Does the budget appropriately allocate and justify costs (13 points)?

5. Outreach and education (2 points):

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education

and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For this program, this includes:

- Are the proposed methods likely to educate the university students nationwide about NOAA's mission and the importance of stock assessment and population dynamics to that mission (2 points)?

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications responsive to this solicitation will be evaluated by a review panel of three or more appropriate experts to determine their technical merit.

When we receive applications we will screen them to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Submission Dates and Times); include SF 424 authenticated by an authorized representative; were submitted by an eligible applicant; address the funding priority; include a budget, statement of work, and milestones, and identify the principal investigator. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it.

If your application does not conform to these requirements and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be returned without further consideration.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate funds.

The review panel's list will be provided in rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the following factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. geographically
 - b. by type of institutions
 - c. by type of partners

d. by research areas

e. by project types

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;

4. Program priorities and policy factors;

5. Applicant's prior award performance;

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups;

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

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, successful applications are usually recommended for funding within 180 days from the date of publication of this notice. The earliest start date of awards (1st of a month) is approximately 240 days after the date of publication of this notice. Applicants should consider this selection and processing time in developing requested start dates for their applications.

The exact amount of funds awarded, the final scope of activities, and the project duration are determined in pre-award negotiations. Recipients must not initiate projects until an approved award is received from the NOAA Grants Office.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been approved for funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division with the issuance of an award signed by a NOAA Grants Officer. This is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. The award will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the PI of the project either electronically or in hard copy. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposals were not selected for recommendation by the Program Office.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and

Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl , http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl .

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). A copy of the notice may be obtained at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/search.html> .

Limitation of Liability - Funding for potential projects in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA Web site at www.nepa.noaa.gov/ , including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA website at http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~ames/NAOs/Chap_216/naos_216_6.html and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations website at http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, number and species expected to be caught, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required.

Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible

measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the grants officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment of any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

C. Reporting

Unless otherwise specified by terms of the award, performance and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually. Performance reports should include progress on identified milestones. Electronic submission of reports is preferred. All reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. In addition to the financial and performance reports, grant recipients will be required to submit a comprehensive final performance report 90 days after the project end date.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding the application process, you may contact: Dax Ruiz, State/Federal Liaison Branch, (727) 824-5324, or Dax.Ruiz@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) (www.ccr.gov). Allow a minimum of thirty days to receive a DUNS number and to be registered in CCR. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through <http://www.grants.gov>.