

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Weather Service (NWS), National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Remote Community Alert Systems Program 2009

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NWS-NWSPO-2009-2001607

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.468, Applied Meteorological Research.

Dates: Applications must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5 p.m. EST March 27, 2009. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Both hard copy and electronic proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant. The submission date on proposals submitted through grant.gov will be the time and date indicator in the grants.gov submission. For proposals submitted by hard copy, the submission date will be the time stamp on the received documents. Hard copy applications must be received by NOAA/NWS no later than 5 p.m., March 27, 2009.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Remote Community Alert Systems Program 2009 represents a NOAA/NWS effort to provide for outdoor alerting technologies in remote communities effectively underserved by commercial mobile service for the purpose of enabling residents of those communities to receive emergency messages. These activities will engage the private sector, academia, and States in opportunities and technologies to further disseminate emergency messages. This program is a contributing element of the Warning, Alert, and Response Network (WARN) Act. NOAA's program is designed to complement other agency contributions to that national effort.

The Federal Communications Commission has defined a "remote" area to consist of a county with a population density of 100 persons per square mile or less, based on the most recently available Census data. Also, "commercial mobile service" means those services that are required to provide E911 services in accordance with Section 20.18 of the Commission's rules. "Effectively underserved" identifies "remote communities" that do not receive "commercial mobile service" as demonstrated by coverage maps, technical analysis, field tests, or any other reasonable means. The program priorities for this opportunity support NOAA's mission support goal of: Weather and Water - Serve Society's Needs for Weather and Water Information.



## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The objective of the Remote Community Alert Systems Program is to provide for outdoor alerting technologies in remote communities effectively underserved by commercial mobile service for the purpose of enabling residents of those communities to receive emergency messages. This program is a contributing element of the Warning, Alert, and Response Network (WARN) Act. NOAA's program is designed to complement other agency contributions to that national effort.

#### B. Program Priorities

NOAA will give sole attention to individual proposals addressing the identified outdoor alerting technologies. Proposals must clearly specify the type of technology being addressed and the direct applicability to remote areas.

#### C. Program Authority

Authority for the Remote Community Alert Systems Program is provided by: 47 USC 1204.

### II. Award Information

#### A. Funding Availability

The total funding amount available for proposals is anticipated to be approximately \$2,130,000. We anticipate making multiple awards, approximately 25, ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000.

#### B. Project/Award Period

This program announcement is for projects to be conducted by investigators for a one year project or a two year project with an anticipated start date of October

1, 2009, unless otherwise directed. When a proposal for a multi-year award is approved, funding will initially be provided for only the first year of the program. If an application is selected for initial funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Funding for each subsequent year of a multi-year proposal is at the discretion of NOAA. Applications must include a scope of work and a budget for the entire award period.

### C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will be a grant.

## III. Eligibility Information

### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are State Governments, U.S. Territories or Possessions and Tribal Communities. This restriction is needed to efficiently manage the potential number of applications.

### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program.

### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Since a goal of this announcement is to foster collaborative interactions between Federal, State, County and Local governments, U.S. Territories or Possessions and Tribal communities, only one proposal can be submitted by a Principal Investigator (PI) from each State, County or Local governments, U.S. Territory or Possessions or Tribal community. In addition, a State, U.S. Territory or Possession or Tribal community may submit more than one application. Entities that are not a State, U.S. Territory or Possession or Tribal community should have their PIs collaborate and include any proposal within the application by the State, U.S. Territory or Possession or Tribal community.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

## A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For applicants without internet access, an application package may be received by contacting Craig Hodan, NOAA/NWS, 1325 East West Highway, Room 3348, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Phone: 301-713-9480 x 187, e-mail: [craig.hodan@noaa.gov](mailto:craig.hodan@noaa.gov).

## B. Content and Form of Application

The proposals should total no more than 30 pages in length. Federally mandated forms and tables of contents are not included within the page count, but all other information is considered in the page count. The items listed below are required before an award can be made. Failure to submit items (1) through (4) by the application date will result in the application not being reviewed. Multi-year proposals up to a maximum of two years will be considered; however, funding beyond the first year will be dependent upon satisfactory performance and the availability of funds.

October 1, 2009, is to be used as the proposed start date on proposals unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer. All proposals must include the following elements: (1) Title Page. The title page should be officially authorized by the PIs and the institutional representative, and should clearly indicate which project area is being addressed. The PIs and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, and address. The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period. (2) Abstract Page. An abstract must be included and should contain an introduction of the problem, rationale, and a brief summary of work to be completed. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution's investigators, total proposed cost, and budget period. (3) Project description. The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the system; objectives; proposed system architecture and operations; relevance to public alert and warning; operational applicability; proposed technology transfer; past collaborations with emergency management community; and cost effectiveness of system. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the emergency management community should be discussed. A year-by-year summary of proposed work must be included. (4) Budget and Proposed Budget Justification. Applicants must submit a Standard Form 424 "Application for Federal Assistance," including a detailed budget using the Standard Form 424A, "Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs." The form is available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The proposal must include total and annual budgets (for multi-year applications) corresponding with the descriptions provided in the project description. Additional text to justify expenses should be included as necessary. There are no additional NEPA questions requested for this application.

## C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5 p.m. EST March 27, 2009. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Both hard copy and electronic proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant. The submission date on proposals submitted through grant.gov will be the time and date indicator in the grants.gov submission. For proposals submitted by hard copy, the submission date will be the time stamp on the received documents. Hard copy applications must be received by NOAA/NWS no later than 5 p.m., March 27, 2009.

#### D. Intergovernmental Review

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

#### E. Funding Restrictions

Funding beyond the first year will be dependent upon satisfactory performance and the continued availability of funds.

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals should be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). For those organizations without internet access, proposals may be sent to Craig Hodan, NOAA/NWS, 1325 East West Highway, Room 3348, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Phone: 301-713-9480 x 187, e-mail: [craig.hodan@noaa.gov](mailto:craig.hodan@noaa.gov). E-mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

Proposals should be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). For those organizations without internet access, proposals may be sent to Craig Hodan, NOAA/NWS, 1325 East West Highway, Room 3348, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Phone: 301-713-9480 x 187, e-mail: [craig.hodan@noaa.gov](mailto:craig.hodan@noaa.gov). E-mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

### V. Application Review Information

#### A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the program goals (35 percent): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this program competition this includes:
  - a. What is the likelihood of the proposed technology to improve outdoor alerting in remote communities?
  - b. Are proposed technologies easily transferred to operations in a reasonable time frame and supportable?
  - c. What is the degree of interoperability with existing Federal (e.g. NOAA and FEMA) public alerting systems?
  
2. Technical/Scientific Merit (30 percent): 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. This includes:
  - a. What is the intrinsic technical value and maturity of the systems proposed as they relate to the enabling residents of those remote communities to receive emergency messages?
  - b. What is the ease of use and any additional user equipment/information technology required to operate/use the proposed technologies?
  - c. What is the complexity of interoperability receiving the originating public alert information and further dissemination to the public?
  - d. What is the throughput time and any delay from origination of the emergency message to receipt by the public via the proposed technology?
  
3. Overall Qualification of Applicants (20 percent): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes:
  - a. Do PIs clearly document past experience and qualification of the organizations proposing the technologies/systems?
  - b. Are there any existing or past interactions/experiences?
  - c. Does the organization have adequate resources to monitor, track, and report information and documentation required for the proposed program?
  
4. Project Costs (15 percent): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This includes:
  - a. Are the project costs realistic and reasonable?
  - b. Is the project schedule reasonable as compared with the cost to complete the proposed project?
  
5. Outreach and Education (0 percent): 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. This specific competition will not use this criterion.

## B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review/screening will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the evaluation criteria. A panel of Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in the evaluation process. The reviewers will develop ratings to produce a rank order of the proposals. A Selection Official will select proposals after considering the panel reviews and selection factors listed below. In making the final selections, the Selecting Official will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors.

## C. Selection Factors

The Merit review ratings shall provide a 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 upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds.
  - a. Geographically.
  - b. By type of institution.
  - c. By type of partners.
  - d. By research area.
  - e. By project types.
3. Whether this project duplicates 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.

Regarding Selection Factor 2a, while a State, U.S. Territory or Possession or Tribal

community may submit more than one application, the selecting official may limit the awards to only one per area. Regarding Section Factor 2b, "type of institution" includes State, U.S. Territory or Possession or Tribal communities. Regarding Selection Factor 2e, "project types" also means "technology types."

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during April and May, 2009. October 1, 2009, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

### VI. Award Administration Information

#### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding from the NOAA grants Officer is the authorization that allows the project to begin. Notification 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.

#### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements: 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>.

2. Limitation of Liability: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

3. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~ames/NAOs/Chap\\_216/naos\\_216\\_6.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~ames/NAOs/Chap_216/naos_216_6.html), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](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, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

### C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online system on a semi-annual basis unless the recipient does not have internet access, in which case hard copy submissions will be accepted. All financial reports are routed directly to the NOAA Grants Officer. Performance reports are routed to the NOAA Program Officer.

### VII. Agency Contacts

Craig Hodan, NOAA/NWS, 1325 East West Highway, Room 3348, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Phone: 301-713-9480 x 187, e-mail: [craig.hodan@noaa.gov](mailto:craig.hodan@noaa.gov).

### VIII. Other Information

To use grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration. [Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.] Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through grants.gov.