

# **NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

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## Executive Summary

### Federal Agency Name

NOS Office of Response and Restoration (ORR)

### Funding Opportunity Title

FY25 NOAA Marine Debris Removal under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

### Announcement Type

Competitive

### Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NOS-ORR-2025-25974

### Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.999

### Dates

This funding opportunity requires a Letter of Intent (LOI) to be submitted to [grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov](mailto:grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov) for competitive review before a full proposal can be submitted. LOIs must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, September 27, 2024. If invited, full proposals must then be submitted in Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) and validated by eRA on or before 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, January 31, 2025.

### Funding Opportunity Description

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) is a division of the NOAA Office of Response and Restoration. Authorized in the Marine Debris Act, codified at 33 U.S.C. § 1951 et seq., the NOAA MDP supports the development and implementation of marine debris assessment, removal, and prevention projects that benefit coastal habitat, waterways, and marine and Great Lake resources. Marine debris is defined as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 C.F.R. § 909.1). The mission of the NOAA MDP is to investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris.

Through this solicitation, NOAA seeks to support large marine debris removal projects with funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (PL 117-58). The overall objective of this funding opportunity is to support impactful, large marine debris removal projects that will improve the resilience of the coastal and marine environment. This competition considers impactful projects to be those that will have long-lasting, transformational benefits to marine and coastal NOAA Trust Resources, coastal communities, and/or local economies.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) describes the types of projects that are eligible for funding, as well as the proposal requirements and how applications will be evaluated. NOAA anticipates up to \$47,000,000 will be available for this grant solicitation. The minimum federal request for this solicitation is \$1,000,000. The maximum federal request is \$10,000,000. The typical funding request will range from \$2,000,000 to \$6,000,000. Proposals requesting over \$6,000,000 are expected to be proposals including a subaward competition for other organizations to identify and apply for funding for localized removal activities. Proposals requesting over \$6,000,000 solely identifying marine debris targets for direct removal organized by the applicant should provide a detailed justification for why this amount of funding is needed. The exact amount of funds to be awarded and the number of awards made will be at the discretion of NOAA following pre-award negotiations with highly meritorious applicants.

## Full Text of Announcement

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The overall objective of this funding opportunity is to support impactful, large marine debris removal projects that will improve the resilience of the coastal and marine environment and ensure the project benefits persist beyond the funding period. Funding for this solicitation is available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (PL 117-58).

Marine debris is defined as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 C.F.R. § 909.1). The NOAA MDP, authorized in the Marine Debris Act, codified at 33 U.S.C. § 1951 et seq., supports the development and implementation of marine debris assessment, removal, and prevention projects that benefit coastal habitat, waterways, and marine and Great Lake resources.

This is one of two NOAA MDP federal funding opportunities in support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to address the removal of marine debris. A second opportunity, NOAA-NOS-ORR-2025-25572 "**NOAA Marine Debris Interception Technologies under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**", will support the removal of marine debris through interception technologies for the benefit of NOAA trust resources.

#### B. Program Priorities

The strongest applications will fully incorporate all of the program priorities for this competition. In some cases, projects may not be able to meet all of these priorities and could still be competitive if they include a description of the limitations preventing them from meeting the full set of priorities. Part of the evaluation criteria (see Section V.A.) is based on how the application materials incorporate the following program priorities:

- **Impactful, large marine debris removal activities to benefit NOAA trust resources.**

The highest priority for this funding opportunity is to support impactful, large marine debris removal projects that will improve the resilience of the coastal and marine environment through long-lasting, transformational benefits to marine and coastal NOAA Trust Resources. Applicants may conduct removal activities on their own, collaborate with other organizations, pass-through funding to subawardees, or administer a nationally- or regionally-focused competitive funding opportunity to allow for funding of smaller projects and lower the administrative burden on applicant organizations. Proposed work should be directed at supporting new or impactful efforts, or programs that require funding to scale-up or expand their existing efforts to achieve broader and more impactful outcomes.

Removals should also be conducted with a focus on alternative disposal methods when possible, which means applicants should use disposal methods that are the most environmentally friendly given the location, availability, and resources of the specific removal effort. Examples of alternative disposal may include: recycling, reuse, waste-to-energy, or other innovative disposal methods.

Removal projects that include monitoring activities to demonstrate long-term outcomes are encouraged. Long-term outcomes can be described as the anticipated benefits to habitats, communities, and the economy. Examples include the ecological services to be restored, benefits to local economies from an increase in tourism, the economic benefit to fishers from the removal of ghost gear, jobs created, or how planned prevention activities will sustain the benefits of the marine debris removal activity. All monitoring activities must be complementary to proposed large-debris removal efforts.

- **Preventing the reaccumulation of debris through complementary and targeted marine debris prevention activities.**

To ensure the outcomes and benefits of the removal activities are sustained beyond the award period, applicants should incorporate prevention strategies to prevent the reaccumulation of the targeted debris. Competitive applications will design prevention strategies that are complementary to the debris types that are being targeted for removal. Proposals that have clearly targeted prevention activities that include the community(s) that are the source of the marine debris and/or the individual or community behavior(s) leading to the debris issue will be prioritized.

Please note, applications must meet the primary objective for this competition and proposals focusing on prevention activities without large marine debris removal activities will not be competitive for this funding opportunity.

- **Advance the principles of diversity, equity, justice, inclusion, and accessibility in removal activities that will benefit local communities, especially Tribes and/or those facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens**

All applications should demonstrate how their work will advance the principles of diversity, equity, justice, inclusion, and accessibility throughout the proposed work. Prevention and removal activities should prioritize collaboration with diverse entities and groups. These include (but are not limited to) collaborations with public and nonprofit organizations, community and watershed groups, anglers, boaters, industry (e.g., commercial and recreational fishing industries, other marine industries, and plastic and waste management industries), corporations and businesses, youth groups, students, academia, Tribes, and local and state government agencies. Collaboration may occur in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, working with stakeholders for whom there is currently limited direct engagement on marine debris issues, encouraging diverse perspectives from project leaders and partners (including, but not limited to, sectors, age, career stage, gender, ethnicity, disability, geography), incorporating different learning or engagement approaches into the project, or translation of resources/signage into other languages (see signage requirements in sections IV.B.4 Budget Justification and VI.B.2 Special Award Conditions).

In addition to the efforts above, applicants should identify any project activities that will take place within, have a portion of the benefits flow to, and/or meaningfully engage with the local community impacted by the targeted debris. NOAA MDP will prioritize projects that clearly incorporate meaningful engagement (see definition below) with the local community where project activities will occur. Meaningful engagement relies on the involvement of those communities that may be affected by a project, in a way that builds trust and addresses barriers to participation. Members of the community that may be affected by project activities should be an integral part of the project visioning and decision-making. This may include but is not limited to the identification of project goals, selection/prioritization of debris targets to remove, and project implementation, and/or developing solutions to any challenges that arise throughout the project period. The goal is to ensure that the scope of the activities is inclusive of the priorities and needs of communities and that the benefits of the activities flow back to the community impacted by the targeted debris.

Outreach or communications directed to communities without any description for how feedback and ideas from the community receiving the messaging will be incorporated into the project, will not be considered meaningful engagement, but should still be described as project benefits. For examples on how to incorporate the local community into your proposal, please see the NOAA MDP website (<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>).

Projects meeting all other competition priorities and that clearly identify project activities taking place within, have a portion of the benefits flow to Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens as identified by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) will be more competitive. The most competitive projects will be those that also meaningfully engage with Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens.

Please see the definitions below for a clear understanding of these priorities.

#### **Definitions**

- **Impactful:** refers to long-lasting, transformational benefits to marine and coastal NOAA Trust Resources. This may include the footprint of removal work and/or long-term outcomes such as the anticipated benefits to habitats, communities, and the economy.
- **Large debris:** refers to abandoned and derelict vessels (ADVs), derelict fishing gear (DFG), and other debris that is unable to be easily collected by hand.
- **Meaningful engagement:** refers to an intentional exchange between the applicant and the local community where both have multiple opportunities to ensure the other is correctly understanding each other's perspectives and ideas.

- **Monitoring:** refers to project-specific, pre- or post-removal data collection where important ecological metrics (large debris accumulation over time, habitat/species impacts, changes in ecosystem services, vegetation, etc.) are analyzed to show the effect of the removal project.
- **NOAA Trust Resources:** refer to marine habitats and resources in which NOAA has a stewardship interest. This includes resources associated with National Marine Sanctuaries, Marine Monuments, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and areas under state coastal management programs, including Areas of Concern within the Great Lakes. NOAA trust resources also include commercial and recreational fishery resources (marine and Great Lakes fish and shellfish); coastal habitats; diadromous fish species; endangered and threatened marine species; marine mammals and marine turtles; marshes, mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs, other coastal habitats; Essential Fish Habitat (EFH); and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). For the purposes of this competition, NOAA trust resources may also include transient or transboundary marine species.
- **Tribe, tribal, or tribal governments:** refers to both federally and non-federally recognized Tribes and Tribal governments as well as Native or Indigenous organizations.

This funding competition uses the following definitions from Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government:

- **Equity:** means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.
- **Accessibility:** means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.
- **Diversity:** is defined as a collection of individual attributes that together help organizations achieve objectives.
- **Inclusion:** is defined as a culture that connects each person to the larger organizing structure.

### C. Program Authority

Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. § 1951 et seq.); Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58)

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates up to \$47,000,000 will be available for this grant solicitation. The minimum federal request under this solicitation is \$1,000,000 and the maximum federal request is \$10,000,000. The typical funding level for the federal share of project awards ranges from \$2,000,000 to \$6,000,000. Proposals requesting over \$6,000,000 are expected to be proposals including a subaward competition for other organizations to apply for funding for localized removal activities.

The exact amount of funds to be awarded and the number of awards made will be at the discretion of NOAA following pre-award negotiations. Publication of this opportunity does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or obligate all or any part of available program funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for any or all proposals. The number of awards to be made under this solicitation will depend on the number and quality of eligible applications, the amount of funding requested by recommended applicants, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and other program funding needs. Awards may include funding from other MDP program funding, other programs, or agencies.

### B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a project period of two to four years in duration. **The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be no sooner than October 1, 2025.** Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project fieldwork start date to accommodate any delays in federal funding or environmental compliance consultations. It is recommended that applicants include pre-removal planning time into their proposal to avoid negative impacts if administrative or other delays occur. The start date should always begin on the first day of the month and the end date should always end on the last day of any given month when making a projection for the award start and end dates.

### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements since NOAA staff will be substantially involved in certain aspects of those projects selected for funding. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, tracking the progress of projects through site visits; developing progress report templates; evaluating, and approving project progress reports; participating in regular conference calls; engaging with the recipient on environmental compliance requirements, technical collaboration, or permitting assistance; supporting the development of public-facing communication materials or events; and reviewing manuscript drafts (if any).

NOAA may choose to award partial funding as part of a multi-year award. If incremental or multi-year funding is awarded, in which NOAA only awards funds initially for the first phase of a project, NOAA will work with selected applicants in structuring the award accordingly, so as to ensure project needs and the timing of project activities aligns with expected funding availability. Once funds are awarded, recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years for the same award. NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent time periods; additional funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to program mission and priorities, and the availability of funds.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

As outlined in the Marine Debris Act, eligible applicants from the **United States, its territories, or Freely Associated States** include:

- State, local, Tribal, and territory governments whose activities affect research or regulation of marine debris
- Federally and non-federally recognized Tribes and Native or Indigenous organizations
- Institutes of higher education
- Nonprofit organizations
- Commercial (for-profit) organizations with expertise in marine debris removals

Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will NOT be considered. Interested federal agencies may collaborate with eligible applicants but may not receive funds through this competition.

Foreign organizations and foreign public entities (see 2 CFR 200.1) from outside of the freely associated states are not eligible to apply.

NOAA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of veterans, minority-serving institutions, Tribes, and entities that work in communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens. The NOAA MDP encourages applicants of all backgrounds, circumstances, perspectives, and ways of thinking to apply.

To be eligible to apply or receive an award, applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations; [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov), [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov), and [eRA Commons](https://eRA Commons). All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants must begin this activity as soon as possible and well before the proposal due date.

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations must be in place by time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

For more information on how to meet these registration and application submission requirements without errors, we advise all to carefully review relevant Applicant and Grantee Training modules:

<https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>. Additionally, we advise that all carefully read the 'Full Proposal Requirements' section below.

#### B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

There is no non-federal matching requirement for this funding. However, the opportunity to provide cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support is acceptable.

Applicants planning to include non-federal match in their proposals should refer to 2 C.F.R. 200.306 for cost sharing or matching policies. Additional resources on these policies may be found here:

<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>. Applicants with approved indirect cost rates planning to provide cost sharing may propose a portion or all of their indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to Section IV.F "Funding Restrictions" for information on indirect costs.

For funded applications that include non-federal match funds within the proposed budget, the ratio of approved NOAA funds to non-federal match funds will be legally binding. NOAA is under no obligation to reduce an award's match requirement once the award document is signed by the recipient.

## C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Other criteria that may affect eligibility include:

- Applicants proposing applications to renew or supplement previously-awarded NOAA projects are allowed; however such proposals will be subject to the competitive process and will not receive preferential treatment.
- This funding opportunity is not intended for removal efforts in non-coastal states or inland areas outside the Great Lakes watershed.
- Project activities must benefit NOAA trust resources and take place within the United States, its territories, or Freely Associated States. Projects proposing removals in international waters, including the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, are not eligible.
- Applications that target large debris removals that will simultaneously collect smaller scale debris are eligible, but the focus of the proposed work and benefits should be on the large scale marine debris removals.
- Applications addressing microplastics or microfibers are not priorities for this solicitation and will be withdrawn from the review, as will research and development proposals.
- Funding for the development of new marine debris databases will not be awarded through this competition.
- Activities that are eligible for removal and reimbursement under a Federal Disaster Declaration will not be considered for use of federal dollars under project awards in this competition.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms, general instructions, and supplementary instructions specific to this competition can be found on Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) under opportunity NOAA-NOS-ORR-2025-25974. If the application forms and instructions cannot be downloaded from Grants.gov, please contact Amanda Dwyer ([amanda.dwyer@noaa.gov](mailto:amanda.dwyer@noaa.gov), 240-533-0402).

### B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of the required Letter of Intent (LOI) and full proposal elements. Applicants must follow the LOI and full application requirements stated in this announcement, or they will not be considered.

Applicants should reference Section V.A. of this NOFO to review this competition's evaluation criteria, and develop proposals with those criteria in mind.

#### **LETTER OF INTENT REQUIREMENT:**

**Applicants must submit a LOI and receive an invitation from the NOAA MDP before submitting a full proposal.** LOIs should be submitted as an email attachment to [grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov](mailto:grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern time on September 27, 2024. Please see Section IV.D. "Submission Dates and Time" for LOI submission instructions.

The goal of the competitive LOI process is to streamline the proposal review and to be able to provide feedback and guidance on invited application ideas. Those applicants whose LOIs do not strongly align with program objectives and priorities, as determined by the NOAA MDP (through the review process described below in Section V.A. "Evaluation Criteria"), will not be invited to submit full applications.

**The LOI must be no more than three (3) pages in length.** It should be single spaced, use 11- or 12-point font on an 8.5" x 11" page size and have page margins no smaller than 1" on each edge. A fourth page may be submitted showing only project site maps and photographs of the project area and/or the debris targeted for removal.

The LOI should include the following components:

a) ***Applicant Organization***

b) ***Project Title***

c) ***Principal Investigator(s) Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email Address.*** Briefly describe the PI or organization's capacities, experience, and/or expertise that would lead to a successful removal project. A list of primary project partners and their roles/contributions should also be part of this section.

d) ***Project Location:*** List the geographic area(s) in which the project will be implemented. Include geographic coordinates of removal site(s), if known.

e) ***Project Type:*** State if the removal activities will be conducted by the applicant/project team, administered through a nationally- or regionally-focused subaward competition, or a combination of both.

f) ***Project Description:*** Clearly state the purpose of the project and briefly list specific tasks to be accomplished with requested funds.

*For all applicants the description should include:*

- The type(s) of debris targeted for removal (ADV's, DFG, etc.) and a clear explanation for why this type or category of debris was chosen
- The need/severity of the debris problem related to the proposed removal site(s)
- The known or anticipated number of specific debris targets to be removed
- The proposed techniques that will be used and indicate the duration of the project
- A summary of the complementary prevention activities to address reaccumulation of the targeted debris. Prevention activities should include the community(s) that are the source of the marine debris and/or the individual or community behavior(s) leading to the debris issue will be prioritized. If the primary source of the debris is from outside of the local community and an effective prevention/outreach approach is not possible for the target debris, proposals should clearly explain the relevance and likely benefits of any other prevention activities that are proposed.
- Any complementary monitoring activities planned

*For applicants conducting direct removals the description should also include:*

- The identification/selection/prioritization process of the specific debris targets proposed for removal. If the specific targets are not currently known please clearly describe how and when the debris targets will be identified and selected for removal if the project is funded.

*For applicants administering a nationally- or regionally-focused subaward competition the description should also include:*

- The total amount of requested funding to be allocated to subawards and the expected range of funding for individual subawards
- Proposed approach for planning and executing the competition
- General evaluation criteria and/or prioritization/selection factors for selecting proposed removal projects (i.e. subawardees capability of planning and executing removal operations, incorporation of meaningful engagement, removals with Tribes, in communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens, etc.)
- The target audience for this competition, how they were selected and how they will be reached

g) Anticipated removal activity start date (not the proposed award start date)

h) ***Funding:*** Indicate the approximate amount of federal funds requested and approximate amount of non-federal match anticipated, if applicable.

i) ***Project Outcomes and Metrics:***

- Describe how project activities will be impactful for NOAA trust resources (habitats and species expected to benefit), coastal communities, and/or local economies and how the project benefits will be sustained beyond the life of the project. NOAA will prioritize applications that demonstrate clear removal and disposal outcomes. Please indicate if any of the benefits will be going to Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens.
- Describe project metrics expected to be tracked, including, at a minimum when applicable: an estimate of how many pounds of debris will be removed from the marine/coastal environment and number of youth and adults served through formal or informal education/outreach.
- When applicable, the following additional metrics are encouraged to be tracked: weight of debris recycled/reused/converted to energy, types of debris captured, acreage to be cleared, number of volunteers, and number of volunteer hours.

j) ***Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility Description:***

- Indicate how the project demonstrates principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility in the project development and throughout the proposed project activities. This may include but is not limited to:
  - Identifying a project team with diverse perspectives (including, but not limited to, sectors, age, career stage, gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic)
  - Determining the project scope and goals
  - Identification/selection/prioritization of the debris targets to remove
  - Application preparation and proposal writing
  - Targeted outreach efforts
  - Proposed methodologies and removal approaches
  - Implementation/execution of project activities including addressing unexpected challenges that arise throughout the project period
  - Approach for hiring project team members and/or awarding contracts or subawards
  - Providing paid opportunities for students from the local community to participate in the proposed removal and/or prevention project activities
  - Developing and/or proposed execution of complementary prevention activities
  - Including a subaward or contract to an organization who specializes in these principles to participate in the project design and/or implementation of activities with the local community where project activities are occurring
- Describe proactive, meaningful, and equitable community engagement in the identification, design, and/or implementation of proposed projects. Applicants should describe how the meaningful engagement is ensuring that the scope of the activities is inclusive of the priorities and needs of communities and that the benefits of the activities flow back appropriately to the community impacted by the targeted debris. Outreach or communications directed to communities without any description for how feedback and ideas from the community receiving the messaging will be incorporated into the project, will not be considered meaningful engagement, but should still be described as project benefits.
  - For examples on how this may be incorporated into projects, please see the NOAA MDP website (<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>)
- Applications will be more competitive if they clearly identify project activities that will take place within, have a portion of the benefits flow to, and/or meaningfully engage Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens. Please also describe how those benefits were identified and how they will be measured.
  - LOIs must reference the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>) to identify if any known project activities are taking place in and/or benefiting or meaningfully engaging with Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens
    - If a community is not identified as facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens by CEJST, the applicant may provide an alternate reference or description along with the CEJST output.

An LOI template can be found at: <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>

If the LOI is incomplete, does not meet the guidelines above, or is submitted late, it may not be considered. Those applicants invited to submit a full proposal will receive an email notification containing feedback and full-proposal submission instructions from NOAA MDP. NOAA MDP may limit the number of full applications invited in order to meet the Program's expected budget or to manage the review workload.

**FULL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS (ONLY IF INVITED):**

**Applicants may only submit a full proposal if invited to do so by the NOAA MDP.**

Applicants are required to apply through the Grants.gov website. No hardcopy applications will be accepted. Please visit <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources> for helpful information on developing and submitting proposal documents/information.

Applicants are encouraged to minimize the number of files uploaded to an application by combining the proposal's files as much as possible. **Adobe PDF is the required file format for application attachments.**

**Important Note:** Prior to submission, carefully review the PDF Guidelines for submission found here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm>. Although this is guidance from the National Institute of Health (NIH), NOAA has recently adopted the same grant management system and is in process of developing similar guidance. Recent applicants have encountered rejected applications for formatting issues, especially:

- All attachments must be in PDF form.
- Do not use "bundling" or "portfolio" features to combine PDFs into a single document. Everything must be visible in the PDF.
- Descriptive filenames may only be 50 characters or less (including spaces).
- Keep attachment file size to 100 MB or less.
- eRA won't accept any pages larger than the U.S. standard letter paper size (8.5" x 11").

We strongly recommend that applicants attempt to submit their full proposals at least a few days prior to the due date in case these or other issues impact your submission, as they are not reasons we can extend the deadline. If you have issues during the submission process, please contact the [eRA Service Desk](#).

Applications must adhere to page limits and any pages that exceed the limit for each section may not be reviewed. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed. Proposals will not be accepted if sent via fax or email.

Each proposal application must contain the following federal application forms (available from Grants.gov) and adhere to page limits indicated for each category, unless otherwise noted below. Required forms and content are indicated by an asterisk(\*).

**REQUIRED FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FORMS:**

Form Number/Title	Short Description	Page Limit
<b>*SF-424</b> Application for Federal Assistance	Official application document where you will fill out information about your organization and key project details. The first PD/PI listed on the application <u>must</u> include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. <u>Failure to register in eRA Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.</u>	N/A
<b>*SF-424A</b> - Budget Information, Non-construction Programs	Provide the budget information for both federal and non-federal match funds for the proposed project. A how-to document is available here: <a href="https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources">https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources</a>	N/A
<b>*SF-424B</b> - Assurances, Non-construction Programs	Requires signature of authorized representative to provide assurances the applicant will follow and comply with listed elements.	N/A
<b>*CD-511</b> - Certifications Regarding Lobbying	Requires signature of authorized representative to provide assurances related to lobbying activities.	N/A

<b>SF-LLL</b> - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	Lobbying activities are not allowed under MDP competitions for federally funded activities, so the SF-LLL should not be needed in your application.	N/A
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**REQUIRED FULL PROPOSAL CONTENT:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Short Description</b>	<b>Page Limit</b>
<b>*Project Summary</b>	Content described below. This is designed to provide reviewers and the selection committee with a snapshot of the project. You will notice there will be the same information requested in the summary and the narrative. Please use the narrative to provide specific details for these components, and the summary to provide a high level overview of these components.	3 pages or less
<b>*Project Narrative</b>	Content described below. This document should include details for your proposed project activities. A template is available here: <a href="https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources">https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources</a>	15 pages or less
<b>*Budget Justification Narrative</b>	Content described below. This document outlines both written justification and explanation of project costs, as well as an accompanying summary table. A resource document is available here: <a href="https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources">https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources</a>	8 pages or less
<b>*Data Management Plan</b>	Content described below. This document should provide a general description of how the data collected or created under the award will be made accessible to the general public. An example is available here: <a href="https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources">https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources</a>	2 pages or less

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Short Description</b>	<b>Page Limit</b>
<b>*Curriculum vitae or résumés of applicant personnel</b>	CVs or résumés of key project personnel should be included. It is up to the applicant to determine for which partners that information is critical to include.	2 pages or less per person
<b>Maps</b>	Maps are strongly encouraged and should depict the geographic extent of where removal efforts will be targeted including any site location(s) and/or highlight potential removal locations	No page limit

<b>Photographs</b>	Photographs are strongly encouraged and could include example debris targets or other relevant photos to aid reviewers.	No page limit
<b>Letters of Support</b>	Letters of support from any organizations involved in the project, other supporters of the project such as local, state, or national elected officials, or community members that would benefit from the project. Guidance can be found here: <a href="https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources">https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources</a>	No page limit
<b>Indirect Cost Rate Agreement</b>	Applicants with an approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal Government must include the signed agreement if requesting these costs as part of the federal request, or are using these funds as match. This document is not required for applicants that choose to use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414) or are not using indirect funds for the project.	No page limit
<b>Other Attachments</b>	Other relevant attachments important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project, such as documentation of any permits necessary to perform the work proposed under the project	20 pages or less

**The following sections further describe the information that should be provided in the full proposal.**

**1. Project Summary (3 pages or less)**

a) *Applicant Organization*

b) *Proposal Title*

c) *Applicant Point of Contact Name, Address, Telephone Number, and Email Address*

d) **Project Type:** State if the removal activities will be conducted by the applicant, through a nationally- or regionally-focused subaward competition, or a combination of both.

e) **Location:** list the geographic area(s) in which the removal project will be implemented. Include geographic coordinates of removal sites, if known. Include if any site locations include Tribal lands and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens

f) **Funding:** Indicate the amount of federal funds requested and the amount of non federal match anticipated.

g) **Description:**

- Clearly describe the specific marine debris issue(s) being addressed and the need for the removals/the purpose of the proposed activities including:
  - Why this debris type was chosen
  - NOAA trust resources that are likely to benefit
  - How detrimental it is to the area and the impacts the targeted debris has on both the environment and wildlife, as well as the surrounding communities
  - Clearly identify project activities that will take place within, have a portion of the benefits flow to, and/or meaningfully engage Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens.
  - Applicants should clearly articulate the proposed project components including:
    - Removal activities including the number of targeted removals and/or plan for surveying/scoping removal targets
    - Complementary prevention
    - Meaningful engagement activities
      - Outreach or communications directed to communities without any description for how feedback and ideas from the community receiving the messaging will be incorporated into the project, will not be considered meaningful engagement, but should still be described as project benefits. Please see the NOAA MDP for examples on how to incorporate the local community into your proposal.
- Summarize all proposed planning and on-the-ground activities expected

- Indicate the duration of the project and provide a general timeline of activities.
- Identify stakeholders and non-federal partners that are likely to be involved and their role in the project design and execution

h) **Outcomes and Metrics:**

- Briefly describe the anticipated ecological and socio-economic outcomes the project is expected to produce, including how the project benefits will be sustained beyond the project. Please also describe how those benefits were identified, how they will be measured, and which if any will flow to Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens
- Provide an estimate how many pounds of debris will be removed from the coastal/marine environment, acreage to be cleared, and the number of youth and adults served through formal or informal education/outreach (if applicable).
- Provide approximate numbers for outcomes of project activities and describe how data will be recorded, characterized, and maintained. Long-term outcomes can be described as the anticipated benefits to habitats, communities, and the economy. Examples of long-term monitoring and prevention outcomes include the ecological services to be restored, benefits to local economies from an increase in tourism, the economic benefit to fishers from the removal of ghost gear, jobs created, or how planned prevention activities will sustain the benefits of the marine debris removal activity.

## 2. Project Narrative (15 pages or less)

When writing the Narrative, applicants should understand the components of the evaluation criteria (see Section V.A.), as they explain how proposals will be scored for the application to be competitive. Applicants should not assume NOAA has any prior knowledge relative to the merits of the project described in the proposal. As such, proposals should be written with an appropriate level of detail. Applicants are encouraged to view the NOAA MDP website for examples of past and current removal projects (<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/our-work/removal>). If a proposed project targets the same debris type being addressed in the same proposed location, applicants should include an explanation of how the proposed work is not duplicative to the ongoing work.

A general outline of the narrative is as follows:

- Introduction & Outcomes
- Project Location(s)
- Detailed Description
  - Identification/selection and description of removal targets
  - Removal methods
  - Disposal approach
  - Prevention activities
  - Monitoring activities
- Permitting and Compliance
- Summary of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility activities
- Community Involvement
- Project Implementation Timeline and Milestones
- Roles and Responsibilities, Project Staff, and Letters of Commitment
- References Cited

The narrative sections should include the following detailed information:

a) **Introduction and Outcomes:**

Include a summary of:

- The problem the proposed removal project is addressing and the need/severity of the debris problem related to the proposed removal site(s)
- If/how the removal of the targeted debris will help address other challenges the surrounding community is facing (eg. removal of debris will help improve local fisheries/food security)?
- The project's geographic reach
- The project focus (directly conducting targeted removals and/or creating and administering a nationally- or regionally-focused competition for subawardees that will propose removal projects)

- The habitats, species, and/or resources (including specific NOAA trust resources (as described in Section I.B.) expected to directly and indirectly benefit from removal activities, including anticipated ecological services to be restored by debris removal
- Any benefits to the economy, local communities, and/or navigation safety that might result.
- Description of short-and long-term goals and objectives that align with the goals of this NOFO
- Clearly identify if any project activities will take place within, have a portion of the benefits flow to, and/or meaningfully engage Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens
- Describe how the project activities will be impactful and how project benefits will be sustained beyond the life of the project

This section should also describe how the project aligns with existing regional or national publicly vetted programs, priorities, or strategic plans (e.g., regional Marine Debris Action Plans, National Estuary Program or NOAA Habitat Focus Area sites, 2021-2025 NOAA MDP Strategic Plan, National Marine Sanctuary management plans, etc.) and describe how they do so. Proposal narratives should explicitly list or otherwise cite such documents for verification purposes, including the page number or specific action number within the plan. NOAA Marine Debris Action Plans can be found on the NOAA MDP website at <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/emergency-response-guides-and-regional-action-plans>.

Applications should include the metrics expected to be tracked throughout all removal, disposal, prevention, and post-removal monitoring activities. Example metrics include:

- An estimate of how many pounds of debris will be removed and how this estimate was calculated
- Appropriate prevention metrics such as the number of youth and adults served through informal education/outreach
- Species/habitat impacts
- Volunteer participation in hours or number of volunteers if applicable
- Weight of debris recycled/reused/converted to energy if applicable
- Long-term outcomes and benefits including the ecological services to be restored, benefits to local economies from an increase in tourism, the economic benefit to fishers from the removal of ghost gear, jobs created, or how planned prevention activities will sustain the benefits of the marine debris removal activity
- Other performance measures, as appropriate.

NOAA will prioritize applications that demonstrate clear removal and disposal outcomes.

b) **Project Location(s):** The geographic area (e.g., national or specific region(s)) in which the proposed removals will take place should be clearly described. Provide maps (if needed) of expected on-the-ground work and the time of year that those activities will take place in each location, if possible. If exact locations are unknown at the time of application, describe project locations in as much detail as possible and when/how locations will be determined.

Please reference CEJST to identify any project areas with work taking place in or benefits flowing to Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens. Applicants may provide an additional explanation of the environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens faced by the community if they are not accurately reflected in CEJST.

c) **Detailed Description:** This section should clearly describe the following components in detail:

- **Identification/selection and description of removal targets**
  - For applications that propose to execute a plan for a particular marine debris removal project with already identified removal targets, the application should include the specific marine debris they plan to remove and how those marine debris targets were identified. This should include if/how removals occurring in Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens were part of the decision making process.
  - For applications executing a plan for marine debris removals and the list of the specific marine debris targets has not been finalized or the applicant is proposing to subaward funding based on a competition, the applicant should describe their goals for specific removals in detail and the process they will use to finalize the list of marine debris targets. This should include if/how removals occurring in Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens will be part of the decision making process.
- **Removal methods**

- All applications should provide as much detail as possible for the planned or intended removal methods. When possible, this should include a description of:
  - The local, state, and federal regulations for removals and the applicant's status of meeting and/or plans for completing these regulations:
  - Identifying vessel ownership
  - Coordination with appropriate local and/or state government jurisdictions
  - Required permits
  - Any subawards/contracts that will be made to conduct the removals
  - Will the local community be engaged in removal efforts (i.e. planning and coordination of removal methods, commitment to hiring local contractors/haulers, etc.)
  - Any potential or expected challenges with individual removals and the planned approach/solutions
  - For applications that propose administering a nationally- or regionally-focused competition for subawardees, the application should include what applicants, geographies, and types of marine debris will be eligible for the competition. Applications should identify the targeted applicant pool for sub-awards, as well as the expected number and funding range of sub-awards to be made for the overall life of the project. Applications should also include the methods proposed for identifying potential sub-awards or projects and how NOAA will be involved in the process and funding decisions. Finally, proposals should include the general criteria that will be used for selecting strong projects and/or determining the success of project activities (i.e. subawardees capability of planning and executing removal operations, incorporation of meaningful engagement, removals with Tribes, in communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens, etc.)
  - Please note, it is NOAA's intention to maintain maximum competition and flexibility in the administration of federal funds through these awards. If the applicant anticipates limiting competition or otherwise restricting the allocation of funding to specific purposes, these limitations or restrictions should be clearly detailed in the narrative.
  - If a project requires scuba diving or the use of surface-supplied air, it is the responsibility of the recipient organization to ensure that divers are qualified and trained to a level commensurate with the type and conditions of the diving activity to be undertaken. The organization must describe their capacity (e.g., appropriate insurance, safety policies, etc.) to effectively oversee all proposed diving activities. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that any diving activities under this award meet, at a minimum, all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the type of diving being undertaken.
- **Disposal approach:** For applications that propose executing a plan for a particular marine debris removal project, the application should describe the planned disposal methods, including plans for alternative disposal as defined in Section I.B. Program Priorities. For applications that propose administering a nationally- or regionally-focused competition for subawardees that will propose marine debris removal projects, the application should describe how disposal methods will be considered and tracked as part of the competition and on-going monitoring.
- **Prevention activities:** To ensure the outcomes and benefits of the removal activities are sustained beyond the award period, applicants should incorporate prevention strategies to prevent the reaccumulation of the targeted debris. All applications should clearly describe the proposed prevention activities and how they complement the removal and disposal activities proposed. Proposals with clearly targeted prevention activities directed toward a confirmed source of the marine debris will be prioritized. A description of the planned approaches for engaging with the identified target audience(s) should also be described. Prevention activities may include those activities aimed at building capacity to address chronic large marine debris problems. This might include: the development or expansion of state-, regionally-, or nationally-focused marine debris prevention programs, vessel or fishing gear turn-in opportunities, vessel or fishing gear recycling programs, targeted programs working with boaters or fishermen, etc. The goal of the prevention efforts should be to reduce the recurrence of the type of debris removed. However, if the primary source of the debris is not able to be locally addressed, applicants should clearly identify the source of debris and describe how they will conduct other relevant marine debris prevention activities to reduce other common marine debris.

Applicants should include a description of how any prevention activities will have benefits flow to and/or have meaningful engagement with (see Section I.B.) the local communities. Projects with meaningful engagement with Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens will be prioritized.

- **Monitoring activities:** If monitoring activities are being proposed, clear methods and information on data collection should be outlined. The application should clearly describe how the activities complement the removal and disposal activities being proposed and, if applicable, include a description of how any monitoring activities will have benefits flow to and/or have meaningful engagement with (see Section I.B.) the local communities.

d) **Permitting and Compliance:** A discussion of how the applicant organization will ensure that all necessary environmental permits will be secured prior to the use of federal funds on activities where such permits are required. Applicants should note that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires NOAA to analyze a project's potential environmental impacts. As such, this section should also describe how necessary project information would be provided to NOAA staff in order to ensure compliance with all federal regulatory requirements. All successful applicants will be expected to have a process in place to provide as much detailed information as is reasonable on project activities, including details about:

- site locations
- species and habitat(s) to be affected
- on-the-ground project activities and methods proposed
- time of year that work will take place
- any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use of and/or disposal of hazardous or toxic substances, potential introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to marine mammals, impacts to endangered and threatened species or their designated critical habitat, impacts to coral reef systems).

See Section VI. Award Administration Information (Subsection B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements) for further detail on the NEPA process and requirements for applicants.

e) **Community Involvement:** Information on how proposed activities will promote community involvement and stewardship. Where appropriate, projects funded under this opportunity may encourage community involvement, such as through direct involvement in project activities, involvement in marine debris prevention, education, and outreach activities that are related to funded work, hands-on training, cash contributions, or donation of in-kind goods and services such as boat time and/or monitoring activities undertaken by volunteers or work crews.

Priority will be given to removal projects that fully meet the other priorities of this competition and describe meaningful engagement with communities. Meaningful engagement can occur in the identification, design, and/or implementation of proposed projects (see Section I.B). Some examples of ways to demonstrate meaningful engagement include, but are not limited to:

- Community members/leaders contributing or leading the removal site selection process/removal methods to ensure the removals in their community will be seen as a benefit and there aren't unintentional consequences by targeting removals located in a community without the input of that community
- Specific paid project roles that will be conducted by community members/students located in the project area and/or impacted by the targeted debris presence/proposed removal project activities. This description should include how those roles were/will be selected. Ideally, these roles would be included in both the design and execution of the removal activities.
- Describing engagement with the community to learn about the specific challenges they are facing and how the proposed removal activities can be conducted to help mitigate those challenges (i.e., ADV removals will make a local waterfront safer/more accessible, removal of DFG will enhance local fisheries and improve food security, removal of large debris items are expected to restore tourism revenue to improve the local economy, etc.)

Outreach or communications directed to communities without any description for how feedback and ideas from the community receiving the messaging will be incorporated into the project, will not be considered meaningful engagement, but should still be described as project benefits. For examples on how to incorporate the local community into your proposal, please see the NOAA MDP website (<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>)

Applicants that do not have current connections with the local community where removals are occurring and/or the capacity to effectively conduct meaningful engagement with the local community, may consider incorporating a subaward with an organization specialized in community engagement initiatives to ensure the proposed activities are executed in a meaningful way with the surrounding community.

***f) Summary of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility Activities***

Applicants should concisely summarize all of the efforts related to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility in the planning and creation of this proposal and/or proposed implementation for project activities described throughout the proposal. Applicants should also indicate any experience they or their project partners have in promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility in their past work.

Proposals should describe how any proposed project activities will have benefits flow to and/or meaningfully engage Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens and how those benefits will be measured. Applicants should use the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov>)) to determine if communities are facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens. We are requesting use of this tool because it was specifically designed to assist agencies in defining and identifying communities facing environmental/climate and socio economic burdens. We recognize this tool does not cover all burdens or lack of resources for all communities, especially for territories and freely associated states. In cases where a community's burdens are not identified by CEJST, applicants may include their own identification of similar burdens. This may include, but is not limited to, a description of the community's previous or current access to resources, community history, power, values, or how they have been historically marginalized and/or overburdened by pollution.

***g) Project Implementation Timeline and Milestones:*** Indicate when the project is expected to begin (month and year, not before October 1, 2025) and end. Please include a timeline for other key project activities and benchmarks, including expected competition deadlines for projects proposing subawards. Applicants are encouraged to include pre-removal/installation planning time into their proposal to avoid negative impacts of these administrative delays. There is no required format for timelines. Please make sure it is clear what months of the year specific activities will be occurring.

***h) Roles and Responsibilities, Project Staff, and Letters of Commitment:*** Describe your understanding of the marine debris issue and technical requirements of large debris removal and disposal activities. Information on project staff roles and responsibilities, as well as the organizational structure and qualifications of project staff should be detailed. Describe the level of staff experience and qualifications in managing grants and implementing projects, including specifically any that addressed marine debris. Information should include a description of how the geographic scope of the proposed project fits with project organization's expertise, capabilities, and mission, and should also describe experiences and qualifications of relevant subcontractors. Applicants will be evaluated on their potential to effectively manage and oversee all project phases, demonstrated by education, training, and/or experience of primary project participants.

If applicable, describe previous NOAA involvement in and/or support for the project. Project team members or subawardees/contractors who will be working with a Tribe or community facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens should describe their role and relevant experience in relation to the proposed project activities with the selected community(ies).

Letters of support should be provided from any other organizations involved to document their commitment to the proposal's goals and objectives, and to show support for long-term goals extending beyond the project's period of performance. Letters of support do not count toward the page limit for the Narrative and should be added as attachments to the application and not mailed separately. They may be referenced in this section.

Guidance on Letters of Support can be found here: <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>

***i) References Cited:*** Include all references to source materials cited within the proposal, if applicable.

Applicants may follow any accepted scholarly format for citations that includes authors' names, year of publication, article and journal (or chapter and book) title, volume number, and page numbers. The Reference Cited section is not included in the 15-page limit but should include bibliographic references only (i.e., no additional parenthetical information), and can be included as either a separate attachment or part of the Narrative.

### **3. Budget Justification Narrative (8 pages or less)**

Applicants should follow NOAA's Budget Narrative Guidance document to ensure the appropriate content and format is provided with the proposal. This document can be found at:

[https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2019/Jun/gmd\\_budget\\_narrative\\_guidance\\_-\\_05-24-2017\\_final.pdf](https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2019/Jun/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf)

The Budget Justification should include both a narrative and a summary budget table that lay out and describe each line item's various costs in as much detail as is reasonable. The summary budget table should be broken out by each year of the project as well. The summary table does not count toward the 8 page limit.

Requirements and recommendations for the Budget Justification include:

- The Budget Justification should be organized using the object classes in the order that they appear on the SF424A.
- Include detailed descriptions of all costs for both federal funds and any cost sharing or matching funds (cost share or matching funds should be described in the same level of detail as the federal funds).
- Ensure personnel roles (including hours and costs by task) are clearly explained and allocated appropriately to the project.
- Ensure the amounts described in the Budget Justification and summary table match each other, as well as the dollar amounts on all required forms and throughout the application.
- Indicate if the proposal has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, what amount has been requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal.
- The source of any matching funds, including applicant or third party in-kind contributions, should be explained, along with their status (e.g. pending, secured, etc.).
- If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, the Budget Justification should describe the overall budget for the entire project to allow NOAA to make an informed determination of a project's readiness and cost-benefit ratio.
- For any subawards expected to be made, describe the process that will be used to identify recipients and the justification for that process. NOAA expects successful applicants to prioritize cost effectiveness and the use of local contractors where possible and if appropriate.
- Requests for equipment (any single piece of equipment costing \$5,000 or more) should be strongly tied to achieving the project's stated goals, and a comparison with rental costs should be provided to justify the need to purchase. If rental of equipment is not possible, an explanation will be required in the budget narrative.
- The NOAA MDP may recommend funding only specific components of a project; as such, applicants should describe the extent to which the overall budget can be scaled up or scaled down. To this end, please provide the estimated requested NOAA funding for specific removal targets and/or targeted removal sites when applicable. For projects that will carry out project post-removal monitoring activities, applicants should separate out monitoring or post-project evaluation costs so that NOAA can evaluate the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of those activities.
- Projects funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law may be required to display signage that acknowledges funding from NOAA Marine Debris Program and other contributing partners (see VI.B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements). Any project activities where signage would be relevant should include this in their budget request.
- Project leads from selected proposals may be required to participate in a Marine Debris Removal Grantee meeting to share the results of the work conducted, discuss challenges, and foster connections across projects. Costs for any travel support should be included in the budget request.
- Refer to Section IV.F. Funding Restrictions regarding indirect costs in the budget.
- Additional guidance on allowable costs for awards and subawards (as outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200) can be found here: <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>

#### **4. Other Application Submission Information**

Detailed maps of project activities, photographs of the targeted debris/project site characteristics, summaries of project designs, and letters of support from project partners (especially those partners critical to the success of the project) are strongly encouraged. Please see the table above titled, "Supplementary Materials" for page limit restrictions.

Letters of support from partners, local, state, and federal government agencies, natural resource and/or waste management agencies, industry, and Congressional representatives are also helpful in demonstrating support for the project and if applicable, how project results will be applied to their management objectives. Such supplementary information should be combined and submitted as a single file in the Grants.gov application. Letters of support should not be mailed separately. Additional guidance on letters of support can be found here:

<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/fy25-noaa-marine-debris-removal-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-applicant-resources>

Files uploaded to Grants.gov should not have any special characters in the filename (example: &, &#x2013;, \*, %, /, #, -), and filenames should be limited to less than 50 characters.

#### **5. Data Management Plan (2 pages or less)**

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan (up to 2 pages). See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional information on what the plan should contain.

### **C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

### **D. Submission Dates and Times**

**We strongly recommend applicants begin the application submission process early and submit applications in advance of the deadline. NOAA will not accept late submissions. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted.**

For applications for projects in areas severely affected by natural disasters or unusually disruptive events, NOAA in its sole discretion may allow late application submissions in such cases.

**This funding opportunity requires a Letter of Intent to be submitted for competitive review before a full proposal can be submitted.** LOIs must be submitted via email as an attachment (to [grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov](mailto:grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov)) no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, September 27, 2024. Please put “FY25 Marine Debris Removal Letter of Intent (LOI)” in the email subject heading. An email confirmation will be sent indicating successful submission of the LOI. If no confirmation email is received, that is an indication that the LOI submission was not successful and will not be reviewed. In such cases please contact NOAA MDP to resolve the issue prior to the deadline. For this reason, it is highly recommended that LOIs are submitted early.

If invited per the instructions in this announcement, full proposals must then be submitted through Grants.gov and validated by eRA on or before 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, January 31, 2025. **Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov and eRA may take up to two business days after submission. For eligible applications submitted through Grants.gov and eRA, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.** Please keep in mind that the registration processes for SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons may take as long as 4-6 weeks and may affect your submission timeline (see Sections IV. Application and Submission Information, Subsections C “Unique Entity Identifier and system for Award Management (SAM), and G “Other Submission Requirements” of this announcement).

As stated above, no hardcopy, fax, or email full proposal applications will be accepted. Applicants without the ability to apply electronically should contact the program to discuss alternate arrangements for submission.

### **E. Intergovernmental Review**

Applications for federal financial assistance are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” All applications for funding under this competition are required to complete item 19 on the 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:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>

## **F. Funding Restrictions**

### **Pre-Award Costs**

Pre-award costs are allowable only with the written approval by NOAA under 2 C.F.R. 200.458 except to the extent allowed for research awards under 2 C.F.R. 200.308(e)(4). Any pre-award costs incurred before the NOAA Grants Office provides a notice of award are at the applicant's own risk. Typically, the earliest date for receipt of awards will be October 1, 2025. Applicants should consider this award timing when developing plans for proposed project activities and are encouraged to incorporate pre-removal/installation planning time into their proposal to avoid negative impacts if these administrative delays occur. See Section IV.A. Award Notices for more information on pre-award costs.

### **Indirect Costs**

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government, or if the applicant elects the 10% de minimis rate, as described below. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. Applicants with approved indirect cost rates may propose a portion or all of their indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally-approved and documentation is readily available.

If indirect costs are part of the proposed project budget, a copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal Government should be included with the application. If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Raishan Adams, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division; Raishan.Adams@noaa.gov.

## **G. Other Submission Requirements**

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include

1. SAM.gov (organization-level registration)
2. Grants.gov (individual accounts for any part of applicant team who will be accessing, uploading, reviewing, and/or submitted full proposal application)
3. eRA Commons (organization-level registration required and individual-registration for specific user roles)

All registrations must be completed prior to the full proposal application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations must be in place by time of full proposal application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

The first PD/PI listed on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. Failure to register in eRA Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application. The eRA Commons registration can take 2-3 weeks to be approved, so it is encouraged to start the registration process as soon as possible. NOAA is not involved with eRA registration. Additional personnel included on the form do not need to include this information, however eRA will create a warning recommending those personnel also have valid eRA Commons IDs. Again - it is not required that those additional personnel include valid eRA Commons IDs regardless of the warnings created by the eRA system.

After submission to Grants.gov, the PI listed on the application will receive an email notification from the eRA email address [era-notify@mail.nih.gov](mailto:era-notify@mail.nih.gov). This email will either confirm a successful submission to eRA or list errors and warnings associated with the application. Errors must be addressed, the application resubmitted via Grants.gov, and an email received by the listed PI indicating a successful submission to eRA for an application to be successfully received by NOAA.

## H. Address for Submitting Proposals

As stated, hard copy applications will not be accepted. Applicants without the ability to apply electronically should contact the program to discuss alternate arrangements for submission ([amanda.dwyer@noaa.gov](mailto:amanda.dwyer@noaa.gov), 240-533-0402).

## V. Application Review Information

### Evaluation Criteria

#### Letter of Intent Evaluation Criteria:

Letters of Intent will be reviewed to determine whether the proposal has the potential to address marine debris activities that meet the competition's priorities. Priorities are listed in Section I.B "Program Priorities" above. Each criteria is given a score of 0 to 5 and is weighted as follows:

Benefits & Outcomes	Weight
How likely is it that the proposed removals will have impactful benefits to NOAA trust resources and the surrounding coastal environment or community (as described in Section I.B)? Does the LOI clearly describe the anticipated ecological and socio-economic outcomes that the project is expected to produce, including how the project benefits will be sustained beyond the life of the project? Are any of the proposed project benefits flowing to Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens? Are requested project metrics described and estimates provided?	30%
Technical Merit	
Does the proposed work qualify as large-scale marine debris removal as defined in this competition? Does the LOI clearly identify the project's overall goals and objectives and lay out a realistic and cost-effective approach? Are the goals and objectives aligned with the priorities of this competition (see Section I.B.)? How well developed are the proposal ideas at this stage? Does it clearly state the purpose of the project and specific tasks to be accomplished with requested funds and clearly describe proposed techniques that will be used?	20%
Qualification of Applicants	
Does the organization and primary project partners demonstrate the capabilities, experience, and/or expertise that would lead to a successful effort? Organizations demonstrating high levels of technical and administrative expertise or capability are likely to score higher on this criterion.	10%
Prevention Activities	
Does the LOI include prevention activities? Is there an appropriate and effective level of prevention activities to be conducted about the identified marine debris issue to prevent reaccumulation? Are prevention activities directed to a relevant audience related to the source of the marine debris?	20%
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility	
Does the project demonstrate how diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility will be promoted in the proposed work? Does the project include removals taking place in and/or having a portion of the benefits flowing to the local communities and how those benefits will be measured? Does the project include meaningful engagement with local communities? Are they Tribes and/or	20%

communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens as identified by CEJST? If CEJST does not have adequate data to correctly identify the burdens a community is facing, applicants should describe those burdens. Projects that indicate a high likelihood of a realized benefit and meaningful engagement (see Section I.B) with Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens in developing the proposal and executing the project activities will score highest on this criterion.	
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The NOAA MDP may use the Selection Factors described in Section V.C. below during the LOI process to determine final invitations. Furthermore, the NOAA MDP may establish cut offs based on reviewer score or the number of reviewer invite recommendations.

**Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria:**

Technical reviewers will assign scores to proposals ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five evaluation criteria and respective point values specified below. Each of the five evaluation criteria have sub-criteria components. Applications that fully address the issues described in all five sub-criteria are likely to be more competitive.

Importance and Applicability of Proposal to Program Priorities	Maximum Points: 40
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the proposed work is relevant to the goals set out by the NOAA MDP in this announcement. For this criteria, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:</p> <p><b><i>Impactful, large marine debris removal activities to benefit NOAA trust resources.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project clearly demonstrate a need for the proposed removals? (4 points)</li> <li>Does the project demonstrate clear marine debris removal and disposal outcomes? (4 points)</li> <li>Will the project have impactful benefits to NOAA trust resources (as described in Section I.B) and will project benefits be sustained beyond the life of the project? (5 points)</li> <li>Does the proposal effectively integrate well with existing regional or national publicly vetted programs, priorities, or strategic plans? (3 points)</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Preventing the reaccumulation of debris through complementary and targeted marine debris prevention activities.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are prevention activities clearly described including how they relate to the proposed removal and disposal activities? (4 points)</li> <li>Are prevention activities directed to a relevant audience related to the source of the marine debris? (4 points)</li> <li>Do the planned approaches effectively engage audiences to prevent marine debris? (4 points)</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Advance the principles of diversity, equity, justice, inclusion, and accessibility in removal activities that will benefit local communities, especially Tribes and/or those facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project advance the principles of diversity, equity, justice, inclusion, and accessibility in the planning and creation of this proposal? (2 points)</li> <li>Does the project advance the principles of diversity, equity, justice, inclusion, and accessibility in the proposed implementation for project activities? (2 points)</li> <li>Do the project activities have benefits that will flow to Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens as identified by CEJST (or applicant when limited data in CEJST)? (4 points)</li> <li>Is there meaningful engagement with Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens impacted by the targeted debris as identified by CEJST (or applicant when limited data in CEJST)? (4 points)</li> </ul> <p>Proposals that demonstrate that the project site selection process included consideration of benefit to/impact on a Tribal and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens or how those communities were meaningfully engaged in the selection process are also likely to score higher.</p> <p>(Outreach or communications directed to communities without any description for how feedback and ideas from the community receiving the messaging will be incorporated into the project, is not considered meaningful engagement)</p>	

Technical Merit	Maximum Points: 30
<p>This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:</p> <p><b>Project Goals and Objectives (7 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal clearly identify realistic and achievable project goals and objectives that align with this competition? Are they realistic and achievable? Reference Section IV.B.2 which describes the requirements for the Project Narrative. (5 points)</li> <li>Does the application provide a realistic project timeline (in line with the award period guidelines described in Section II.B)? (2 points)</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Description (12 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the applicant clearly identify debris targets to be removed in the proposal? If not, is there a clear plan for identification of targets along with supporting evidence that targets exist? (5 points)</li> <li>Does the proposal include detailed descriptions for the proposed removal activities, including proposed removal techniques and disposal methods? If post-removal monitoring is occurring, are those techniques/methods also clearly described and appropriate for the proposed activities? Are these methods appropriate for the proposed project activities? (5 points)</li> <li>Are all project activities complementary to the removal work clearly described? (2 points)</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental Impacts (5 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the geographic area in which the proposed removals will take place clearly described? Are detailed maps and/or GPS coordinates of removal sites included, if applicable? (2 points)</li> <li>Does the application include information on the expected species that may be encountered in the area and affected by project activities? (1 point)</li> <li>Does the applicant provide assurances that implementation will meet all federal, state, and local environmental laws? (2 points)</li> </ul> <p>Applications submitted with all of the above information, along with evidence of completed environmental assessments, completed consultations, or secured permits, and that demonstrate that proposed debris removal activities are legally permissible in the project area are likely to score higher on this criterion.</p> <p><b>Project Metrics (6 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the applicant describe how they and any project partners or subawardees will collect specific, measurable metrics on removal, disposal, prevention, monitoring, species/habitat impacts, volunteer participation, economic benefits, benefits to Tribal and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens and other performance measures as described above in Section IV. B? Do they provide realistic estimates of these metrics and how they will be measured? (4 points)</li> <li>Does the proposal include a Data Management Plan? If so, does it adequately describe what data will be collected during the project and how it will be made accessible and independently understandable to general users in a timely manner, in compliance with Data Management requirements described in Section VI.B.9? (2 points)</li> </ul>	
Overall Qualifications of Applicants	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to meet proposal objectives. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the applicant and any identified project partners or subawardees have the ability and expertise to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, including but not limited to designing, implementing, and effectively managing large debris removal, disposal, prevention, and post-removal monitoring projects, or regional coordination efforts? (2 points)</li> <li>Does the applicant demonstrate the project team has a strong understanding of the marine debris issue being addressed? (2 points)</li> <li>Does the applicant describe how they will effectively manage and oversee all project phases, demonstrated by the education, training, and/or experience of primary project participants? (3 points)</li> <li>Does the applicant have the administrative capacity (i.e., the administrative resources and capabilities that the applicant has, or that are available to the applicant) to successfully manage both the federal award as well as any potential subawards? (3 points)</li> </ul>	

Project costs	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. Applications will be evaluated on the following:</p> <p><b>Project Budget Composition (5 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the overall budget realistic, enabling the applicant to effectively and successfully meet all proposed objectives with the funding requested? (3 points)</li> <li>Is the overall budget reasonable, including only those costs necessary to effectively and successfully meet all proposed objectives? (2 points)</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Budget Organization (5 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the budget justification narrative contain a sufficient level of detail, as required in Section IV.B.? This includes whether the applicant includes a detailed summary budget table, the budget is organized by SF-424A object classes, and describes both the federal and non-federal funding needs for all required project costs (i.e., for both implementation and administration activities).</li> </ul> <p>Proposals with detailed Budget Narratives that follow the format of NOAA’s Budget Narrative Guidance document (link is provided in Section IV.B.) are likely to score higher on this criterion.</p>	
Community Support	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion evaluates whether the project has effective engagement from relevant stakeholders, including engagement of Tribes and/or communities facing environmental/climate and socioeconomic burdens, if applicable. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the application indicate if/how the removal of the targeted debris will help address other challenges the local community is facing (eg. removal of debris will help improve local fisheries/food security)? (2 points)</li> <li>Has the applicant demonstrated meaningful engagement from project partners (as defined in Section I.B.)? Does the application describe how proposed activities will promote community involvement and stewardship? (4 points)</li> <li>Does the applicant demonstrate strong community support for the project? This may be reflected by the diverse perspectives, strength and involvement of project participants, partners and local entities, as well as include letters of support from project partners, state and local governments, members of Congress, private landowners, community groups, or relevant resource agency personnel familiar with the issue? Do these letters indicate that the partners are meaningfully involved in both the planning and execution of the project? (4 points)</li> </ul> <p>Proposals that include letters of support from all proposed project partners will score higher on this criterion if those letters demonstrate their commitment to the proposal’s goals and objectives, and to show support for long-term goals extending beyond the project’s period of performance. This also includes letters from landowners and other stakeholders involved with or impacted by the project, granting permissions and other assurances that the project has their full support.</p>	

## Review and Selection Process

Letters of intent and full proposal applications will be screened to determine if they are eligible, complete, and responsive to this funding announcement. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application with omitted documentation or a minor administrative discrepancy that can be easily rectified or cured.

### Letter of Intent Merit Review

Letters of Intent will undergo a merit review by at least three qualified reviewers, in accordance with the Letter of Intent Evaluation Criteria (see Section V.A). Each reviewer will evaluate their assigned proposals and provide individual scores. Reviewers may discuss applications with each other but scoring will be on an individual basis. The MDP will use scores and invite recommendations by reviewers to determine which LOIs will receive invitations to submit full proposals. The NOAA MDP may also use the Selection Factors described in Section V.C. below during the LOI process to determine final invitations.

### Full Proposal Merit Review

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review.

Applications that pass the administrative review will be reviewed by at least three independent reviewers drawn from experts in a range of disciplines that are relevant to the applications. Each proposal will receive at least three written reviews from the reviewers assessing its merits with regard to the evaluation criteria. Reviewers may discuss applications with each other, but scoring will be on an individual basis.

These reviews will be averaged to produce a rank order by review group (groups may be assigned based on geography, project type, or some combination thereof). If recommended by the Competition Manager, NOAA may conduct a secondary panel review composed of federal employees to determine which top ranked proposals best meet the program's objectives and priorities and are most responsive to the evaluation criteria. The panel review rating would then be presented to the Selecting Official in order to determine which applications should be recommended to the NOAA Grants Management Division.

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the selection factors provided in Section V.C. The Selecting Official shall make final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

The Competition Manager, MDP staff, or grants specialist may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the merit or administrative correctness of the application and may ask for proposal or project modifications as a result of the review process. This may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions or edits are satisfactorily answered.

NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

### **Selection Factors**

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on 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 habitat type
  - e. by debris type
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 or the applicant's capacity to meet program objectives.
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 and/or there are significant environmental concerns with proposed project activities.
8. Relevance to legislative priorities of the NOAA MDP.

Therefore, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored proposals. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not among those recommended for funding.

### **Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

Successful applications generally will be identified by June 1, 2025, and notifications to all applicants are anticipated to be made as soon as possible thereafter. Typically, the earliest start date for projects will be no sooner than October 1, 2025, dependent on the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, environmental compliance analysis, documentation supporting cooperative agreement activities, and the availability of funding. It is recommended that applicants include pre-removal/installation planning time into their proposal to avoid negative impacts if these administrative delays occur.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices**

**PRE-AWARD COSTS.** Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

**GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE.** Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

**LIMITATION OF LIABILITY.** Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

### **UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT**

**REQUIREMENTS.** Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

**RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** For awards designated on the CD-450 as Research, the Commerce Terms, and the Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions (Research Terms) as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently, at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a specific award condition.

### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS**

**AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.** The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in eRA at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

**BUREAU TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** Successful applicants who accept an award under this solicitation will be bound by bureau-specific standard terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. For NOAA awards only, the Administrative Standard Award Conditions for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Financial Assistance Awards U.S. Department of Commerce are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance>

**HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH.** For research projects involving Human Subjects an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or an exemption determination will be required in accordance with DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Section G.05.i "Research Involving Human Subjects" found at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA).** NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500\\_1508.pdf](http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf). 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 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. 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.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.** Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

**MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS.** The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

**DATA SHARING PLAN.** 1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. 2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. 3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at:

[https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data\\_Sharing\\_Directive\\_v3.0\\_remediated.pdf](https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf) and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information:

<https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information>

**NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY.**

NOAA requires organizations receiving federal assistance to report findings of sexual harassment, or any other kind of harassment, regarding a Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, or any other key personnel in the award.

NOAA expects all financial assistance recipients to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment free workplaces wherever NOAA grant or cooperative agreement work is conducted, including notification pathways for all personnel, including students, on the awards. This expectation includes activities at all on- and offsite facilities and during conferences and workshops. All such settings should have accessible and evident means for reporting violations and recipients should exercise due diligence with timely investigations of allegations and corrective actions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>.

**SCIENCE INTEGRITY.** 1. Maintaining Integrity. The non-Federal entity shall maintain the scientific integrity of research performed pursuant to this grant or financial assistance award including the prevention, detection, and remediation of any allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, and the conduct of inquiries, investigations, and adjudications of allegations of violations of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. All the requirements of this provision flow down to subrecipients. 2. Peer Review. The peer review of the results of scientific activities under a NOAA grant, financial assistance award or cooperative agreement shall be accomplished to ensure consistency with NOAA standards on quality, relevance, scientific integrity, reproducibility, transparency, and performance. NOAA will ensure that peer review of "influential scientific information" or "highly influential scientific assessments" is conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review and NOAA policies on peer review, such as the Information Quality Guidelines. 3. In performing or presenting the results of scientific activities under the NOAA grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement and in responding to allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, the non-Federal entity and all subrecipients shall comply with the provisions herein and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 202-735D, Scientific Integrity, and its Procedural Handbook, including any amendments thereto. That Order can be found at <http://nrc.noaa.gov/ScientificIntegrityCommons.aspx>. 4. Primary Responsibility. The non-Federal entity shall have the primary responsibility to prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. Unless otherwise instructed by the grants officer, the non-Federal entity shall promptly conduct an initial inquiry into any allegation of such misconduct and may rely on its internal policies and procedures, as appropriate, to do so. 5. By executing this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement the non-Federal entity provides its assurance that it has established an administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigating, and reporting allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct; and that it will comply with its own administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigation, and reporting of such misconduct. 6. The non-Federal entity shall insert this provision in all subawards at all tiers under this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement.

**REVIEW OF RISK.** After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments about any information concerning organizational performance listed in the Responsibility/Qualification section of SAM.gov for consideration by the awarding agency.

**REVIEWS AND EVALUATION.** The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with §200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

**REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND**

**CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.** If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States—this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials<sup>1</sup> are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

**WAIVERS.** When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOC may grant, a waiver from these requirements.

DOC will notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. 1) When DOC has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which DOC determines that: a. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; b. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or c. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. DOC will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at [whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america](https://whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america).

**DEFINITIONS.** “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives<sup>2</sup>—that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference” means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. “Project” means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. -- 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIA, § 70917(c)(1).

**INDIRECT COST RATE.** If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or [jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov](mailto:jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov)

## **C. Reporting**

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted semi-annually. Reports are submitted electronically through eRA.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

For further information contact Amanda Dwyer ([amanda.dwyer@noaa.gov](mailto:amanda.dwyer@noaa.gov); 240-533-0402) or the NOAA MDP Grants Team ([grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov](mailto:grants.marinedebris@noaa.gov)).

## **VIII. Other Information**

### **Institutional Awards**

Activities funded through this competition may have long-term planning goals and objectives common to the programmatic needs of both NOAA and the recipients. As such, NOAA may seek to maintain a long-term partnership with recipients by establishing cooperative agreements in relevant situations as “institutional awards.” If a cooperative agreement is established as an institutional award, the initial cooperative agreement will be established for no more than five years and NOAA may issue new cooperative agreements to the recipient for similar or related activities through a noncompetitive selection process.