

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Table of Contents

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY	1
Executive Summary	1
Full Text of Announcement	2
I. Funding Opportunity Description	2
II. Award Information	6
III. Eligibility Information	7
IV. Application and Submission Information	9
V. Application Review Information	20
VI. Award Administration Information	27
VII. Agency Contacts	32
VIII. Other Information	32

Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

Fisheries Habitat Conservation Program Office (HCPO)

Funding Opportunity Title

NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnership Grants

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2024-28122

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.463

Dates

Applications will be accepted and considered on an annual basis, with due dates of October 28, 2024; September 5, 2025; and September 4, 2026. Applications for projects starting approximately October 1, 2025 must be received through www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on October 28, 2024. To be considered for funding in subsequent fiscal years, applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. on September 5, 2025 for projects starting on approximately October 1, 2026, and September 4, 2026 for projects starting approximately October 1, 2027. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2025. Further application details are provided in the announcement.

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov). Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on registration requirements. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

Funding Opportunity Description

The principal objective of the NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnership Grants competition is to provide federal financial and technical assistance to habitat restoration projects that meet NOAA's mission to restore coastal habitats and support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

(<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/documents/glri-action-plan-3-201910-30pp.pdf>) goal to protect and restore habitats to sustain healthy populations of native fish species in the eight U.S. Great Lakes states. Proposals submitted under this solicitation will be evaluated based on alignment with our program priorities, including: 1) contribution to GLRI Focus Area 1 (Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern) goals to implement management actions within Areas of Concern (AOC), and 2) contribution to GLRI Focus Area 4 (Habitats and Species) goals to restore habitat for native Great Lakes fish species whose populations have been impacted by habitat degradation. Through this solicitation, we intend to address GLRI Focus Area 4 goals by prioritizing a subset of habitat restoration projects identified by the Lake Committees as Environmental Priorities to meet fish community objectives for Great Lakes fish species. Lake Committees are composed of senior officials from state, provincial, and U.S. intertribal fishery agencies, convened by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Together, they are responsible for managing the Lakes' fisheries and developing plans and guidance to sustain healthy populations of Great Lakes commercial and recreational fish species.

Applicants are encouraged to propose one or more projects that are identified on 1) an AOC management list and/or 2) a Lake Committee Environmental Priorities list. (Please see section I.B of this funding opportunity to see the AOCs and Environmental Priorities that are prioritized in this competition). Proposed activities may include future project development and feasibility studies; engineering and design; permitting; on-the-ground restoration; pre- and post-removal implementation monitoring; stakeholder engagement, including in tribal, indigenous and underserved communities; building the capacity of new and existing restoration partners to manage multi-faceted project design and construction; and education and outreach. Applicants may therefore apply for funding to support all of these activities; however, priority will be given to applications that include on-the-ground construction likely to occur during the award period.

Proposals selected for funding through this solicitation will be funded through cooperative agreements. Multi-year awards are expected to be funded in annual increments for up to three years. Applicants with multi-year projects should propose estimated funding for the second and/or third years, which NOAA will consider when determining the final amounts that may be provided in future years, pending future federal appropriations and progress towards project milestones. NOAA anticipates typical federal funding for awards will range from \$500,000 to \$6 million over one to three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than \$250,000 or more than \$30 million total over three years. NOAA anticipates up to \$12 million will be available under this announcement in Fiscal Year 2025 and that 5-10 awards will be made. Estimated funding in subsequent fiscal years has not been determined; this announcement may be amended if estimates for future fiscal years become available. Funds will be administered by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation. Awards are dependent upon the amount of funds made available to NOAA for this purpose by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in FY25 - FY27 budgets. NOAA reserves the right to fund some and not all the proposed projects based on program priorities and funding availability.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The principal objective of the NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnerships Grants solicitation is to provide federal financial and technical assistance to habitat restoration projects that meet NOAA's mission to restore coastal habitats and support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/documents/glri-action-plan-3-201910-30pp.pdf>) goal to protect and restore habitats to sustain healthy populations of native fish species in the eight U.S. Great Lakes states. This funding opportunity prioritizes habitat restoration projects identified in Section I.B. that aim to restore functional coastal wetland, nearshore, and/or riverine habitats that support native fish migration, reproduction, growth, and/or seasonal refuge for Great Lakes fish. Proposals submitted under this solicitation will be evaluated by how well they demonstrate that the proposed habitat restoration actions will lead to significant and sustainable benefits for Great Lakes native fish species.

B. Program Priorities

As stated above, the principal objective of the NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnership Grants solicitation is to support habitat restoration projects that contribute to NOAA and the GLRI priorities by restoring habitat for native Great Lakes fish species whose populations have been impacted by habitat degradation.

Note: please see sections III.C. for information about ineligible restoration activities and IV.B for examples of relevant habitat restoration projects that have been funded under this program.

Highest priority will be given to applications that address at least one of the following program priorities and substantially contribute to GLRI goals, which are the basis for the Importance and Applicability evaluation criteria:

1. GLRI Focus Area 1 - Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern

Habitat restoration that contributes to implementing management actions in Areas of Concern.

2. GLRI Focus Area 4 - Habitat and Species

Through this competition we intend to address GLRI Focus Area 4 goals by prioritizing a subset of habitat restoration projects identified by the Lake Committees as Environmental Priorities to meet fish community objectives for Great Lakes fish species. Lake Committees are composed of senior officials from state, provincial, and U.S. intertribal fishery agencies, convened by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Together, they are responsible for managing the Lakes' fisheries and developing plans and guidance to sustain healthy populations of Great Lakes commercial and recreational fish species.

The subset prioritized for this competition is listed below:

Subset of Lake Superior Committee Environmental Priorities

-Hydrologic modification of unregulated tributary flows within the basin to provide minimum flows to meet reproductive and early life-history requirements for brook trout. Specific focal areas to address hydrological modifications that impact fish production include tributaries along the south shore of Lake Superior in Wisconsin and on the Bayfield Peninsula.

-Habitat restoration in the St. Louis River and Bay area including restoration of connected coastal wetlands and floodplains and enhancement of spawning habitat for additional lake sturgeon and walleye production.

-Protection of Buffalo Reef and nearshore areas in Traverse Bay from further encroachment of stamp sands, and long-term mitigation.

Subset of Lake Michigan Committee Environmental Priorities

-Reef restoration of degraded reef habitats, which provide critical spawning and nursery areas for multiple species of common concern across Lake Michigan including lake trout, lake whitefish, and cisco. Specific focal areas to implement reef restoration actions in Lake Michigan are in the Charlevoix/Harbor Springs, Michigan area. Reef restoration projects that focus on restoring historic conditions using natural substrates are prioritized.

-Coastal wetland reconnection/restoration, softening of shorelines, and increasing submerged aquatic vegetation, which provide critical spawning and/or nursery habitats for multiple species of common concern across Lake Michigan, including lake sturgeon, lake whitefish, yellow perch, esocids, and centrarchids. Priority locations include the western and eastern shorelines of Green Bay and the southern basin nearshore of Lake Michigan.

-Tributary connectivity/fish passage restoration is critical for providing access of adult species of common concern, including lake sturgeon and lake whitefish, to reproductive and nursery habitat across the Lake Michigan Basin. Consideration of sea lamprey control remains paramount for all tributary connectivity/fish passage restoration projects. Specific locations where connectivity is limiting production of priority species includes: the Peshtigo River and the Oconto River.

-In-stream habitat restoration is critical for providing suitable reproductive habitat for multiple species of common concern, particularly lake sturgeon. Specific focal areas for in-stream habitat restoration include locations in the Grand River, Michigan, particularly below the Sixth Street Dam.

Subset of Lake Huron Committee Environmental Priorities

-Reef restoration of degraded reef habitats, including mitigating impacts of sedimentation on reefs, which provide critical spawning and nursery areas for multiple species of common concern across Lake Huron, are necessary for the achievement and maintenance of self-sustaining populations of lake whitefish, cisco, lake trout, and walleye. Reef restoration projects that focus on restoring historic conditions using natural substrates are prioritized. Specific focal areas to implement reef restoration actions in Lake Huron include:

- The Thunder Bay Reefs, MI
- The Saginaw Bay Reefs, MI
- The Northern Main Basin region, MI
- Implementation of actions to address spawning habitat augmentation, sedimentation, and connected nursery habitat restoration is critical to restore functional habitat and enhance fish production.

-Coastal wetland habitat restoration/reconnection, which will provide critical spawning and nursery habitats for multiple species of common concern across Lake Huron, including esocids and walleye. Specific focal areas for coastal wetland reconnection and restoration include locations in Saginaw Bay.

-In-stream habitat restoration and enhancement that is critical for providing suitable reproductive habitat for multiple species of common concern, particularly lake sturgeon and walleye.

Subset of Lake Erie Committee Environmental Priorities

-Regional nutrient reduction strategies to reduce phosphorus loading and achieve mesotrophic conditions in the western, central, and nearshore waters of the eastern basins and embayments. The Maumee River watershed is a focal area for nutrient reduction strategies. Projects that improve water quality through the creation or enhancement of fish habitat, such as coastal wetland restoration and floodplain reconnection, are eligible. See section III.C. for examples of ineligible activities.

-Increase connectivity of select tributaries where connectivity is limiting production of fish community objective species including: Black River, MI – Wingford Dam and Huron River, MI – Flat Rock Dam/Huroc Dam.

-Increase shoreline/nearshore complexity through softening of shorelines, rehabilitation of connected coastal wetlands, and increases in submerged aquatic vegetation. Specific locations where shoreline alterations (hardening, diking, etc.) are limiting production of fish community objective species include:

- Sandusky Bay
- Huron-Erie Corridor
- Grand River, OH
- St. Clair River Delta

Subset of Lake Ontario Committee Fish Habitat Priorities

-Enhance or restore effective upstream passage for adult Atlantic Salmon to allow access to spawning and juvenile rearing habitat.

-Restore nearshore open coast, cold-water spawning and nursery habitat for Lake Trout, Whitefish and Cisco.

-Restore degraded stream habitat to improve reproductive capacity in streams that are managed for wild fish production. Priority activities include:

- Install riverbank stabilization/fish habitat improvement structures and instream flow enhancement features for Atlantic Salmon on the Salmon River (system-wide) including Trout and Orwell brooks.
- Add spawning substrate (gravel) for Walleye and Lake Sturgeon downstream of Dexter Dam on the Black River.

-Restore the ecological function of coastal wetlands to enhance Northern Pike, Muskellunge and other members of the wetland-dependent fish community. Priority actions include:

- Complete level ditching and potholing to increase fish spawning and nursery habitat in coastal wetlands, including Lakeview Wildlife Management Area, Port Bay, and Sodus Bay.
- Promote restoration and rehabilitation of lost coastal wetlands.

NOAA is committed to the goals of advancing equity and support for tribal, indigenous, and underserved communities. Applicants should identify if the project is to be carried out in full or in part by a tribal government; if the project is located within tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities; and/or whether a portion of the resilience benefits from the proposed work will flow to tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities. This is a Justice40 covered program, and applicants should review Section IV.B. “Project Narrative” for information pertaining to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to assist in identifying disadvantaged communities.

NOAA is also committed to enhancing community resilience to extreme weather and climate hazards and providing other co-benefits. Applicants should describe how the proposed work will benefit human populations within or near the project site(s), and how these actions will reduce vulnerability to the climate hazards that are most threatening to the local communities. Applicants may also describe how the proposed work will enhance the ability to plan and prepare for adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards or provide additional co-benefits to the community (e.g., economic vitality, increased access to natural resources).

The following definitions of key terms apply to this funding opportunity.

- **Ecosystem resilience.** This term refers to the capacity of an ecosystem to absorb, withstand, respond to, and/or recover rapidly from disturbances linked to extreme weather events and climate hazards. Resilient ecosystems can resist damage from extreme weather events or climate hazards, while retaining or having the ability to recover their inherent structure and ecological function.
- **Community resilience.** This term refers to the capacity of a human community to withstand, respond to, and/or recover rapidly from disturbances linked to extreme weather events and climate hazards. Community resilience can also include the ability to plan and prepare for adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards, and the capacity to adapt to changing environmental conditions.
- **Underserved communities.** This term refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. Underserved communities are defined in Executive Order 13985: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-raciaequity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government>.
- **Co-benefits of restoration.** This term refers to the multiple benefits of restoration that extend beyond biologically relevant benefits to target species. This may include: contributions to ecosystem and community resilience; increases in business opportunities; revitalization of public communities; improvements in access to recreational, subsistence, and/or culturally important fishing opportunities; reductions to safety hazards; and/or reductions in operation and maintenance costs. Co-benefits are often measured through socioeconomic methods.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration and conservation: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970.

Under 33 U.S.C. § 893a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct and support formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean and coastal science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean science careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency with consideration given to the goal of promoting the participation of minorities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates typical federal funding for awards will range from \$500,000 to \$5 million over one to three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than \$250,000 or more than \$30 million total over three years. NOAA anticipates up to \$12 million will be available under this Announcement in Fiscal Year 2025 and that 5-10 awards will be made. Awards are dependent upon the amount of funds made available to NOAA for this purpose by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in FY25 - FY27 budgets. Estimated funding in subsequent fiscal years has not been determined; this announcement may be amended if estimates for future fiscal years become available.

Funds will be administered by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Any funds provided to successful applicants for subsequent-year funding requests will be determined by progress towards stated milestones and availability of funding at the discretion of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation and the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD).

NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct costs of application preparation if programs fail to receive funding or are canceled because of other agency priorities, or for any other reason. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for habitat restoration, the merit and ranking of the applications, and the amount of federal appropriations made available in FY25 and subsequent fiscal years. NOAA reserves the right to fund some and not all the proposed projects based on program priorities and funding availability.

B. Project/Award Period

NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for up to 3 years. Award periods may be extended, at the discretion of NOAA and based on project needs, up to the extent legally allowable. This is typically a maximum award length of five years. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2025. Both federal and non-federal match pre-award costs will be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD offers a grant is at the applicant's own risk.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as defined in 2 C.F.R. Sec 200.1, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, providing assistance with technical aspects of the habitat restoration project, review and comment on design plans, and review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.323.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profits, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non- governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants may be located anywhere but must propose work within the Great Lakes basin and within one of the eight U.S. Great Lakes states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota).

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov).

Registration Requirements: Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on required registrations. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

There is no statutory matching requirement for this funding. Though not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions or informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. Non-federal match funds may be optionally included within the application to demonstrate stakeholder support for the proposed work. NOAA also desires cost sharing or leverage to encourage partnerships among government, community, industry, and academia. To this end, applicants should note that cost sharing or leverage is an element considered in the Evaluation Criteria under "Project Costs" (Section V.A.4).

Match is entered on federal forms, recorded on award documents, and becomes a legally binding component of the award. Leverage refers to all other funding support that contributes to completion of the project(s). Leverage can include funds expended toward the project(s) either before or during the award period. Federal sources cannot be considered for formal matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage and collaboration. Formal match to NOAA funds can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include third party in-kind goods and services and volunteer labor. Applicants should refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.306 for explanations of match funds, which must be used during the award period, generally.

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of match reflected in the award document signed by NOAA's Grants Management Division, unless amended based on extenuating circumstances. NOAA is under no obligation to amend the matching contributions once agreed to by the recipient. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the overall number of volunteers and third party in-kind participation hours devoted to habitat restoration projects. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from non-federal partners, as long as such contributions are not used to match any other federal funds and are available within the project period stated in the application. Letters of commitment for any secured resources that will be used as non-federal match for an award under this solicitation should be submitted as an attachment to the application (see Section IV.B).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Application submission time should be documented by the applicant by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. Applicants should consider the possibility of unforeseen impacts from natural hazards that could affect internet access and use of Grants.gov on or before application due dates. Applicants should be aware that localized hazardous weather, monthly scheduled Grants.gov weekend maintenance, or other situations that impact the ability to submit application packages may not result in changes to the recommended application deadline. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov and regarding submitting paper applications is contained in Section IV.G. All applications MUST contain ALL required forms and proposals will be reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this funding announcement. Failure to submit forms may result in disqualification from this competition. See Section IV.G for more details.

The following information describes ineligible project proposal types and activities:

Activities that are required by a separate local, state, or federal consent decree, court order, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) exemption or license condition, statute, or regulation are not eligible. Applicants planning to combine grant or matching funds with mitigation should review the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources Final Rule at 73 Fed. Reg. 19594 (April 10, 2008). NOAA plans to follow the approach adopted by some other federal agencies on Page 19636 that describes scenarios where mitigation credits may or may not be obtained in association with federal financial incentives.

Effectiveness monitoring and research are not eligible project types. See Section IV.B and V.A.2 for more information on eligible monitoring.

Ineligible activities related to water quality improvements include, but are not limited to, proposals addressing hard infrastructure only for water quality improvement, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, elimination of combined sewer outfalls, replacement of failing septic systems and implementation of agricultural animal waste management plans. However, projects that improve water quality through the creation or enhancement of fish habitat, such as coastal wetlands, are eligible.

Proposals that focus only on marine debris prevention and removal are not eligible.

Proposals that focus on acquisition of real property are not eligible.

Proposals that focus on beach renourishment solely for recreational purposes are not eligible.

Projects seeking funds only for invasive species removal and management will also not be considered under this solicitation. However, NOAA may fund invasive species removal as a component of an overall habitat restoration project proposal.

Reef restoration projects that propose the use of molluscicides only are not eligible.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If an applicant does not have internet access, application materials may be requested from Rina Studds by e-mail at rina.studds@noaa.gov or phone (301) 427-8651 and Julie Simmons by email at julie.simmons@noaa.gov or by phone (734) 680-5671.

B. Content and Form of Application

A complete, standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted, as described below. See section IV.A. for submission information.

Each proposal must include the following Federal application forms:

- Standard Form (SF)-424: Application for Federal Assistance. The SF-424 form family may be downloaded from <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>.
- SF-424A: Budget Information for Non-construction Programs. (An SF-424A for each year of requested funding will be required prior to an award offer, but is not required as part of the initial application.)
- Project Abstract Summary form
- SF-424B: Assurances for Non-construction Programs
- CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-LLL (if applicable): Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

In addition to the federal application forms, NOAA recommends the following components as part of a complete application package. Page limits assume an 11- or 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Components should be organized into a maximum of three flattened PDF files outlined below, with a maximum length of 75 combined pages. It is recommended that file sizes not exceed 100MB in order to preserve the applicant's formatting. Additional information on formatting attachments can be found here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm>

- Project Summary, Project Narrative, and Data Management Plan (20 page limit)
- Budget Justification (10 page limit)
- Supplemental Materials and project design (45 page limit)

Reviewers will only evaluate the first 75 pages of the submitted materials. The application should follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V.A) to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The information provided below may help to address the evaluation criteria.

Proposals that include multiple restoration sites should fully describe the proposed restoration activities at each site. If all project(s) details cannot be described within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

Project summary (2 page limit):

We recommend you provide a summary with the following components:

-Applicant Organization

-Project Title

-Site Location: Include the geographic coordinates and the nearest town or watershed. If multiple sites are proposed, please include the geographic coordinates for all sites.

Brief Project Description: Describe the extent to which the proposed work aligns with the stated program objective (Section I.A) and program priorities (Section I.B). The description should outline the expected benefits for the target species or fisheries, and how ecosystem resilience will be strengthened. Explain how your proposed work will enhance community resilience to climate hazards. Describe the proposed work within the context of the landscape, watershed, or other geographically defined boundary. The description should identify how the restoration aligns with comprehensive planning documents or other relevant resources, and if the proposed actions demonstrate high priority and transformative potential within the geographic area. Identify if the project is located within tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities and/or whether a portion of the resilience benefits from the proposed work will flow to tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities.

Timeline: Provide a timeline of all project activities to be supported with federal and/or non-federal matching funds, including an indication of when activities will begin.

Landowner(s): Include name and address (if privately owned) or public agency contact for each proposed project.

Funding Request: Outline the total request for NOAA funds for each year of the project period. If non-federal matching contributions are proposed, include the status of the funds (e.g., not applied for; pending; secured). If other financial support beyond NOAA federal funds and non-federal match funds will be used to complete the proposed work, outline the sources and amount of these leveraged funds. If you have submitted (or plan to submit) your proposal to other relevant funding opportunities, please identify the funding source and/or title(s) of the competition(s), amount of funds requested, and approximate decision date(s) for anticipated award selection. If space is limited, provide a summary here and include a full description in the Supplemental Materials.

Project Narrative (18 page limit): Provide sufficient background and contextual information for reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project(s). The application should generally follow the organization of the Evaluation Criteria (see Section V.A) to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The information provided below is intended to help applicants address the evaluation criteria.

Relevance to Program Priorities: Describe how the proposed projects will deliver meaningful results that are relevant to GLRI Action Plan III Focus Area 1 and/or 4 goals to restore habitat for native Great Lakes fish species whose populations have been impacted by habitat degradation. As described in Section I.B, through this solicitation we intend to address GLRI Focus Area 1 and 4 goals by prioritizing habitat restoration projects in a subset of priority Areas of Concern and/or projects identified by the Lake Committees to meet fish community objectives for native Great Lakes species. The narrative should explicitly describe how the proposed project(s) addresses the Priorities. For full points, a letter of endorsement from the relevant Lake Committee representative or AOC Public Advisory Council (PAC), as appropriate, should be submitted for all proposed projects.

The narrative should succinctly describe the historic and current condition of the restoration site(s) and the habitat-based issue(s) that is the primary focus of the proposal. Describe any processes that have resulted in degradation of the habitat and how these processes have been abated to allow for successful restoration. Identify one or more species targeted by the proposed habitat restoration, their historic and current status or population estimates, and the project(s)' expected benefits on the target species and ecosystems. The narrative should describe the project's context within the ecosystem, including how it complements other nearby restoration efforts, as appropriate.

Applicants may also explain why the proposed work is meaningful within the selected geographic region. Applicants should refer to watershed plans or other fishery-related strategic planning, conservation, or management documents, as appropriate to the proposed work. Proposals should identify how the restoration aligns with comprehensive planning documents or other relevant resources, and if the proposed actions demonstrate high priority and transformative potential within the defined geographic area. Proposals that include multiple sites should demonstrate how projects collectively contribute to the priorities within the same geographic area or watershed.

Applicants should also include the number of acres to be restored and/or stream miles to be made accessible to fish through the proposed activities and any other anticipated long-term ecological benefits, so that reviewers can understand the scale and meaning of your proposed project in the context of the watershed. Please indicate how the anticipated benefits and quantitative performance measures have been determined (e.g., ground-truthing, desktop assessment).

Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Hazards and Providing Other Co-benefits: Applicants should describe how the proposed habitat restoration will benefit human populations within or near the project site(s), and how habitat restoration actions will promote resilience to the climate hazards that are most threatening to the local communities. Applicants may also describe how the proposed work will enhance the ability to plan and prepare for adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards. Examples of co-benefits include, but are not limited to: protection from flooding and extreme weather events; reduction in erosion impacts; increases in job opportunities; improvements in access to recreational, subsistence, and cultural fishing opportunities; and creation of public spaces.

Proposals should include descriptions of anticipated resilience benefits and other co-benefits that will result from habitat restoration within the spatial and temporal context of the proposed activities. Co-benefits are defined in Section I.B.

Proposals may include specific metrics within the Project Narrative to capture the impact or scale of the proposed work on community resilience and other expected co-benefits such as public safety or community enhancement. Public safety benefits may include infrastructure improvements, removal of physical hazards, or flood risk reduction, with potential metrics such as: number of structures improved; number of structures protected from flooding or storm surge; or changes in flood heights. Community enhancement benefits may include recreational or economic improvements, with potential metrics such as number of new recreational access points or avoided or reduced maintenance costs. For more information on developing socioeconomic performance metrics for restoration projects, applicants should visit: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-financial-services/program-priorities-habitat-restoration-grants>.

Providing Benefit to Tribal, Indigenous, and/or Underserved Communities, Including Through Partnerships:

Applicants should identify if the proposed work is to be carried out in full or in part by a tribal government or if the project is located within a tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved community. Applicants should indicate whether a portion of the resilience benefits from the proposed work will flow to tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities and how those benefits will be measured.

As needed, to assist with identifying and assessing the marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities that are connected to their proposed restoration actions, NOAA encourages the use of the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) (at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>) as the primary mapping tool. Applicants are encouraged to use the information available through CEJST, other relevant tools, and direct engagement of tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities to assist in assessing how the benefits of a project will reverse or mitigate the burdens of disadvantage.

Technical/Scientific Merit: As noted above, this funding opportunity prioritizes habitat restoration projects identified in Section I.B. Proposals should describe in detail the actions to be undertaken.

Project Feasibility and Methodology: Applicants should provide evidence to support the feasibility of the techniques, and address whether the methods are technically sound and safe for the public. Proposals that include multiple sites should describe the restoration methods for each location. For each restoration site, applicants should clearly identify the project phase(s) (e.g., feasibility study, engineering and design, on-the-ground implementation) and the proposed restoration techniques.

Project Detail: The project narrative should include a timeline with key milestones and deliverables identified and detail how the actions will be completed within the specified time period (a gantt chart or other chart is helpful to include). If multiple restoration sites are included within one proposal, the proposed actions should be fully described for each site. Applicants should identify interim milestones that correspond to funding year increments. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and the current document status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured), and incorporating the likely award start date and species-specific work windows. For projects with permits or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement), lead federal agency, contact information for the lead agency person, and where public copies of the document are available. See also Section VI.B. of this announcement.

Note: Federally funded projects are subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Applicants are advised to include a sufficient budget request to provide NOAA with required information to meet NHPA requirements and consultations with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Refer to your state's SHPO office for more details on SHPO review requirements.

Suggested details to include in your proposal, by restoration activity:

-Hydrologic restoration (modification) reverses the negative impacts to habitat function created by restricting or changing surface water flow. Examples include restoring water elevations and flow through fill removal, culvert removal/replacement to allow natural flooding of wetlands, complete removal of levees and dikes or other impediments to historic/natural flow or hydrology, floodplain reconnection, or creation/restoration of off-channel habitats. Priority will be given to projects that restore habitat that previously existed. Applicants proposing to install structures such as fish passage devices or water control structures should include discussion of an operation and management plan that specifies the entity responsible for the operation and maintenance of the structure(s) and how they will be operated and maintained throughout the life of the structure(s) to ensure lasting habitat benefits. Applicants should also describe measures that will be put in place to prevent filling of the flood storage area upstream of new or modified water control structures.

-Fish passage projects remove barriers that prevent native Great Lakes fish from accessing spawning habitats and create or improve habitat to support the growth of juvenile fish. Priority will be given to fish passage/barrier removal projects that directly benefit native Great Lakes migratory fisheries by providing free and open passage from spawning grounds to the open lake environment. These projects include, but are not limited to, dam removals and/or culvert removals and replacement with bottomless arch culverts or bridges, fish ladders, by-pass channels, and/or nature-like fishways. Fish passage project applications should describe the significance of the project to historical fish populations in the river, identify the river length that will be restored, the distance to the next upstream blockage, any downstream blockages or seasonal impediments to fish passage, and whether the target barrier is a partial or complete barrier. Applications should state how the project will meet fish passage guidelines for the area, and identify and provide documentation of support for the project from the landowner/dam owner. Applications should highlight any synergies with other fish passage efforts in the watershed, including fish passage improvements at hydropower dams. Fish passage projects proposing to install fish passage devices or movable control structures should submit a summary management plan that specifies the entity responsible for the operation and maintenance of the structure(s) and how they will be operated and maintained throughout the life of the structure(s) to ensure lasting habitat benefits. All types of fish passage projects should address issues and potential control strategies regarding aquatic invasive species (e.g., sea lamprey). If a project is proposing fish passage, include appropriate documentation demonstrating consultation with and support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sea Lamprey Control Program.

-Shoreline/nearshore restoration may include removing fill and debris, removing hardened structures, stabilizing the shoreline with natural materials and vegetation, installing nearshore rock reefs, and/or restoring spawning beds. Applications should describe the significance of the fish habitat in the area including desired function (e.g., shallow water nursery habitat), historic conditions and materials to be used. Proposals should highlight synergies with other fish habitat efforts in the watershed. NOAA prioritizes reef restoration projects that restore historic conditions and/or complement previous or planned habitat restoration efforts and that use natural substrates (e.g., gravel, cobble, woody debris, plant material). Reef restoration projects that propose the use of molluscicides only are not eligible.

As noted above, proposals that include multiple restoration sites should fully describe the proposed restoration activities at each site within the project narrative section. If all aspects of a multi-year and/or multi-project award cannot be described within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

For feasibility or design projects, applicants should: describe the overall habitat restoration need and goals of the feasibility and design activities; provide justification for potential design alternatives, if known (e.g., technique is appropriate and proven as demonstrated by similar successful projects, approach is comprehensive); discuss expected outcomes; list members of the planning team including NOAA staff and provide the decision framework; and discuss how support for the proposed activity would catalyze subsequent on-the-ground restoration.

Sustainability: The narrative should describe future management, beyond the award period, including mechanisms to protect, maintain, or sustain the restoration site(s) so the effects of the funded project(s) can benefit the target species and habitat into the future. If applicable, a description of a landowner agreement may contribute to this element. For new or replacement structures, the estimated design life of a project should be noted, including any factors (such as changing weather patterns) that may shorten the expected functional life of the project. Applicants should also describe how the proposed restoration design, methodology, and techniques provide for ecosystem resilience to extreme weather events, self-sustaining habitats, or adaptation to potential climate change impacts at the project site. An operations and maintenance plan should be considered when applicants are proposing to install structures that require ongoing operation and maintenance in order to be effective, such as fish passage devices, fishways, or tide gates. The proposal should include discussion of an operations and management plan that specifies the entity responsible for the structure(s) and how they will be operated and maintained throughout the life of the structure(s) to ensure lasting habitat benefits.

Project Assessment: Applicants should describe the habitat-based metrics or other quantitative performance measures that will be used to evaluate the success of the proposed restoration actions. Specifically, on-the-ground restoration projects should include ecological targets that can be evaluated within approximately one-year post implementation. Proposals that focus solely on pre-implementation activities, such as planning, feasibility, and/or engineering and design, should include baseline monitoring. Proposals requesting funding for on-the-ground implementation activities should include a Monitoring Plan (2 page limit) as part of the Supplemental Materials. Applicants should be willing to work with NOAA to adjust planned monitoring activities, if necessary, to ensure that the proposed parameters are appropriate and meet the requirements below. Proposals that include one of the NOAA Restoration Center's primary restoration methods (e.g., hydrologic restoration, fish passage) should incorporate the applicable implementation monitoring parameters found in the NOAA Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring (Tier 1) Guidance. The guidance document provides an overview of the preferred structure for Monitoring Plans. The monitoring guidance and regional contact persons can be found at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/monitoring-and-evaluation-restoration-projects>. Proposals that do NOT include one of the NOAA Restoration Center's primary restoration methods named above should propose sufficient, cost-effective monitoring metrics that will assess whether the restoration actions were carried out as designed. Proposals should: 1) include parameters that evaluate short-term structural changes at the project site(s) (e.g., as-built surveys), and may also include a basic measure of success (e.g., presence/absence of target species); 2) propose pre-implementation data collection, when applicable; 3) include parameters with quantitative or clearly defined targets; and 4) include parameters with targets that can be evaluated within approximately one year after project implementation. While the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation values effectiveness monitoring and research, funds are not included within this solicitation to support these efforts. Effectiveness monitoring examines how well the project performs, is longer-term than implementation monitoring, and often requires detailed field investigations of multiple physical, biological, and geochemical processes. Proposals for effectiveness monitoring that do not qualify for other NOAA competitive funding may be eligible for NOAA's Broad Agency Announcement, posted on Grants.gov.

Data Management Plan: Proposals submitted in response to this announcement should include a Data Management Plan. NOAA provides the following Data Management Guidance for this program. The Data Management Plan should follow the Guidance for Data Management Plans at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants#restoration-monitoring-and-data-management>. 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. 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. Final Data Management Plans may be developed in coordination with NOAA as part of NOAA's substantial involvement, as described in Section II.C. See also Section VI.B. of this Announcement. The contact officials for data management guidance are listed in Section VII. of this Announcement. NOAA's Data and Publication Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts is available at <https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php>.

Overall Qualification of Applicant

Restoration and Conservation Qualifications: Within the project narrative, applicants should describe the restoration and conservation qualifications of the project team (staff and/or partners), including experience with planning, design, engineering, implementation, and/or monitoring for habitat restoration projects. Resumes or curriculum vitae (CVs) for up to five (5) key personnel should be included within Supplemental Materials, and the documents should highlight relevant education, experiences, and training.

Management Capacity: Within the project narrative, applicants should describe the project team's ability to successfully manage a federal award. Applicants should demonstrate a strong capacity to maintain financial and administrative records and fulfill reporting requirements. Within the attached resumes or CVs, applicants should highlight relevant experience with management of federal funds or other significant grant awards. Applicants should address whether the project team has the capacity to complete the proposed work on time, even in the face of adverse conditions.

Project Costs: Applicants should follow the guidance provided under Budget Narrative below.

Outreach and Education:

Stakeholder Support: NOAA encourages robust public support for restoration projects, as evidenced by letters from a diverse range of participants and partners. A diverse range of groups may include community associations, local environmental justice organizations, business / agricultural groups, adjacent landowners, and state, local, and tribal governments. If landowner support is essential to implementing the restoration actions, a letter of support or permission should be included. Applicants should indicate which letters, if any, are from identified underserved communities or tribes. Support letters should also note their relationship to the proposed project. Letters of stakeholder support (and landowner support, if applicable) should be included in Supplemental Materials.

Community Outreach and Education: Applicants should describe the strategy to share information and educate the public about the restoration actions. Strategies may include, but are not limited to: various formats of outreach content (e.g., signage, newsletters, online content); materials in multiple languages, if applicable; events and volunteer opportunities for community members; informal education and mentoring for interns or early career professionals, including those from underrepresented groups in environmental science and policy careers; opportunities for press visits; or other outreach that encourages support for restoration and environmental stewardship. Applicants should consider collaborating with local community members to incorporate volunteer, education, and/or hands-on opportunities for their communities.

Budget Justification (10 page limit)

Reviewers will evaluate project costs by reviewing your budget justification. If requesting funds for a multi-year proposal, award costs should be broken into annual/interim funding requests up to three years in duration, based on logical milestones in the implementation plan. For instance, a proposal request might include a request for a project's design costs in year one, estimated construction costs needed in year two, and estimated post-project monitoring costs in year three. Another example would be a project that requests construction costs for discrete sites in each year of a multi-year award. One, two, or three-year proposals will be accepted. Please note, the total proposed over three years sets an award maximum, and final award funding can not exceed the amount identified for all years in the original proposal.

The budget justification should break project costs out into the following categories: Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Other, and Indirect Charges, and these totals should also be recorded on the SF-424A (see also <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-08/Supplemental-Application-Instructions-and-Budget-Guidance.pdf#page=11>). For projects with contractual components, applicants must follow procurement standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.317-200.327. If the proposal is considered for funding, NOAA Grants Management Division reviewers will be looking for information on the procurement methods used for each contract, as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.320. Applicants are encouraged to provide separate budgets for each contract and they must provide budgets for each contract in excess of \$250,000, to determine whether proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable. For contracts that are not yet in place at the time of submitting the proposal, the budget narrative must include an explanation of how contractual costs were estimated and what procurement methods they will use to select contractors. Another note is that you should consider costs associated with the Build America, Buy America Act (See Section VI.B). We suggest that you reach out to a [Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) early, to help source USA made materials if needed.

If NOAA funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project should be provided to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and is needed for successful project implementation. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other funding sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal, should be included. The applicant should provide an estimate of all monitoring-related costs within the proposed budget.

Applicants should clearly indicate if funds are proposed as official, non-federal match, or if the funds are informal leverage. Applicants should refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.306 for explanations of match funds, which must generally be used during the award period. Match is entered on federal forms, recorded on award documents, and becomes a legally binding component of the award. Leverage refers to all other funding support that contributes to completion of the project(s). Leverage can include funds expended toward the project(s) either before or during the award period. Applicants should include descriptions and documentation regarding match and/or leverage, as appropriate. The NOAA Restoration Center has provided guidance regarding the level of detail required to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary, and realistic in the “Supplemental Instructions” at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants>

Supplemental Materials (45 page limit)

All supplemental attachments should be combined into one file that includes a list of the documents and associated page numbers. The following documents may be included:

-If available, project designs should be included in the application in order for reviewers to comprehensively assess the technical merit of the proposed restoration action(s). Relevant sections of construction specifications, scopes of work for services, and cost estimates may also be provided. Please do not attach feasibility studies or watershed plans. The critical components of those documents should be summarized in the Project Narrative. Please remember that reviewers will only evaluate a maximum of 75 pages for each application package.

- Include a map or aerial photo with nearby towns and/or roads labeled and with the site location(s) highlighted;
- Include brief resumes or curriculum vitae (CV) for up to three (3) key personnel (maximum of 1 page per person) and any examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the project team;
- Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA);
- Adaptive management plan, and/or long term maintenance plan(s);
- Monitoring plan;
- Site photos;

- Include any other relevant supporting materials, such as letters of support:

- Letter from relevant Lake Committee representatives from the jurisdiction from where the project is proposed indicating that the proposed project meets the objectives of the Lake Committee Environmental Priorities, as appropriate.
- Letter from relevant Public Advisory Council or state agency responsible for implementing the AOC program indicating that the proposed project is on a management action list for the target Area of Concern, as appropriate.
- If a project is proposing fish passage, include appropriate documentation demonstrating consultation with and support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sea Lamprey Control Program.
- If applicable, include a letter documenting private owner or public land manager support of the project proposed for the owned site(s);
- Letters from adjoining landowners, and
- Letters documenting financial and in-kind support.

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.

This program does not use this questionnaire, except as described in Section VI.B.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at SAM.gov.

Each applicant, unless the applicant has an exception approved by the federal awarding agency under 2 C.F.R. § 25.110(d), is required to: (1) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (2) Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in its application; and (3) 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. 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.

Applicants should allow a minimum of two weeks to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once, but must be periodically renewed. On April 4, 2022, the federal government began using a new UEI number provided by SAM. The organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed to receive a UEI, which is provided by SAM. If an entity is already registered in SAM.gov, the new UEI has already been assigned and is viewable in SAM.gov. This includes inactive registrations.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications will be accepted and considered on an annual basis, with due dates of October 28, 2024; September 5, 2025; and September 4, 2026. Applications may be submitted at any time prior to the due dates. Applications for projects starting approximately October 1, 2025 must be received through www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on October 28, 2024. To be considered for funding in subsequent fiscal years, applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. on September 5, 2025 for projects starting on approximately October 1, 2026, and September 4, 2026 for projects starting approximately October 1, 2027. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2025.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, contact the official listed in Section VII of this announcement for referral information. The information can also be reviewed at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SPOC-list-as-of-2023.pdf>

F. Funding Restrictions

Both federal and match pre-award costs incurred up to 90 days prior to the award start date may be requested and will be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (previously via NOAA Grants Online and currently through eRA Commons on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2025.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In addition, an eligible applicant under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), may elect to charge a de minimis rate of modified total direct costs (MTDC). An applicant may also describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Jennifer Jackson in the NOAA Grants Management Division by email at: jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose the reduction of part, or all, of allowable indirect costs as a component of cost sharing.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applications must be submitted by the due dates and times provided in Section IV.D. Late applications may be considered in subsequent fiscal years, until the final deadline of September 4, 2026, if funding is available.

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov). See below for more detailed information on each required registration process.

1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

SAM.gov registration is required to do business with the U.S. government. After registering with SAM.gov, you will receive a 12-character Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) that you will use throughout the application process.

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for initial SAM.gov registrations and at least two weeks for SAM.gov registration renewals. Additional information on SAM.gov registration is available here: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

You must update your SAM.gov registration any time your entity's information changes. You must also renew and revalidate your entity's SAM.gov registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration. The renewal process may take up to two weeks. Your SAM.gov account's primary point of contact will receive an email message alerting them to the renewal requirement at 60 days, 30 days, and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration by the deadline, it will expire.

2. eRA Commons

After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must register with eRA Commons and create several required user accounts. NOAA uses eRA Commons to process grant applications and manage grant awards.

NOTE: eRA Commons requires applicants to create one ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE and two USER ACCOUNTS before submitting an application. These requirements are described in detail below.

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for eRA Commons registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your Grants.gov registration. Additional information on the eRA Commons registration process is available here: <https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>

After creating an overall account for your "institution", which may be for your organization or yourself as an individual, eRA Commons requires you to set up at least two user accounts: one Signing Official (SO) account and one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account.

- The Signing Official (SO) user account must be assigned to an individual with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. The SO will receive 4-5 emails throughout the registration process.
- The Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account must be assigned to an individual with primary responsibility for the project(s) described in the grant application. The eRA Commons User ID (Username) for the PD/PI must also be listed on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).

Your SO and PD/PI user accounts must be active before you submit an application. Both accounts can be assigned to the same individual if appropriate.

3. Grants.Gov

After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must complete a one-time registration process with Grants.gov. Grants.gov is a government-wide portal used to solicit and accept grant applications.

We recommend allowing at least two weeks for Grants.gov registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your eRA Commons registration. Additional information on the Grants.gov registration process is available here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

Submission Validation

The Grants.gov and eRA Commons validation processes for a submitted application can take up to two business days after submission. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

Grants.gov and eRA Commons will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Submissions may also be rejected if:

- The Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI)'s account username within eRA Commons is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).
- The Universal Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 8.c (UEI).
- The Congressional District is not entered in the correct format on the SF-424 form for item 16 (Congressional Districts). The correct format is: [State Abbreviation]-[three digit district number]. For example, Virginia's 1st Congressional District would be listed as VA-001.
- PDF files are not flattened. To flatten a fillable PDF, you can use the "Print to PDF" function from any web browser or PDF reader application.
- File sizes exceed 100 MB.
- Page sizes are greater than 8.5x11.
- File names exceed 50 characters (including spaces).
- File names include special characters.

After you submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by FOUR automated responses (1-Grants.gov Submission Receipt; 2-Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application; 3-Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application; 4-Grants.gov Agency Tracking Number Assignment for Application).

In addition to the Grants.gov automated notification messages, you may receive automated email notifications of any errors or warnings identified by eRA Commons. You must resolve all eRA Commons errors prior to the application due date in order for the application to be processed.

Once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an additional automated notification that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned.

You should save and print the proof of submission messages from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons. If you do not receive an acceptance message from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons, you should follow up with the agency contact listed in VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

Electronic applications are strongly encouraged through grants.gov; however, paper applications will also be considered. Paper applications should be sent to: NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries (F/HC3), 1315 East West Highway, Rm. 14875, Silver Spring, MD 20910. ATTN: NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnership Grants. All applications MUST contain ALL required forms. Failure to submit forms may result in disqualification from this competition. Applicants are responsible for tracking their own applications. Proposal application materials, including all letters of collaboration or support, shall be submitted together in one package. Please notify the contact official in Section VII of this announcement by email regarding any paper submissions by mail, and/or for any technical difficulties using Grants.gov.

Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt for paper applications. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than seven business days following the closing date will be considered for funding in future fiscal years, subject to the availability of funds.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 40
--	---------------------------

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Relevance to Program Priorities: How well do the proposed project(s) link to the program priorities and address GLRI Focus area 1 and 4 goals (see Section I.B). (20 points)

0 – project(s) does not align with any of the program priorities; 10- project(s) aligns moderately well with program priorities; meaningful benefits to native, Great Lakes fish species are likely to result, with moderate progress toward meeting GLRI Focus area 1 and/or 4 goals. 20 - proposed project(s) are well aligned with program priorities as demonstrated by letters of support by relevant entities; extraordinary benefits to native Great Lakes fish species are likely to result, with substantial progress toward meeting GLRI Focus area 1 and/or 4 goals.

(b) Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Hazards and Providing Other Co-benefits. To what extent will the proposed actions enhance community resilience to climate hazards? To what extent will the proposed actions result in additional co-benefits to the community, which could include socioeconomic metrics that are targeted to the proposed work? For pre implementation activities (such as future project development planning and feasibility studies, engineering and design, permitting, and stakeholder engagement) and/or organizational capacity building, what is the likelihood that the proposed work will result in enhanced community resilience or other co-benefits, once restoration actions are implemented? (10 points)

0 – proposed actions will not enhance community resilience to climate hazards or provide other co-benefits; 5 – proposed actions will result in moderate enhancement of community resilience to climate hazards, with potential to provide other co-benefits; 10 – proposed actions include on-the-ground implementation and will result in substantial enhancement of community resilience to climate hazards, with a high likelihood of providing other co-benefits.

(c) Providing Benefit to Tribal, Indigenous, and/or Underserved Communities, Including Through Partnerships. Has the applicant demonstrated that the proposed work is located within a tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved community, as defined within Section I.B? Has the applicant demonstrated alignment with stated priorities and needs of tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities? Will the benefits of restoration flow to tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities? (10 points)

0 – proposed actions will not benefit tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities; 5 – proposed actions have strong potential of providing benefit to tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities; 10 – proposed actions are located within tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities and/or have a high likelihood of providing benefit to tribal, indigenous, and/or underserved communities

2. Technical/scientific merit

Maximum Points: 30

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Project Feasibility and Methodology: To what extent is the proposed project(s) feasible from a biological and engineering perspective, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe for the public? For feasibility and design proposals, what is the technical merit and feasibility of the proposed approach (e.g, has the applicant described similar successful projects, is the technique appropriate and proven, is the approach comprehensive?) (10 points)

0 – proposed approach is not feasible, safe, or technically sound; 5 – proposed approach is potentially feasible, safe, and technically sound, but lacks documentation to support the proposed methodology; 10 – proposed approach is feasible, safe, and technically sound, and substantial evidence is provided to support the proposed methodology for all proposed projects.

(b) Project Detail: To what extent does the proposal completely describe the proposed restoration actions, the current status of the project(s) (e.g., 60% design plans complete), permitting and environmental compliance status, and the applicant proposed a realistic time-frame and interim milestones. Complete project description(s) should include all relevant phases of the restoration from initial feasibility study through design, permitting, construction, project implementation monitoring, operation and/or maintenance. If the proposal is a feasibility and design proposal only, to what extent does the proposal explain the planned approach, or provide examples of other projects where the approach was successful? (Please see section IV.B for suggested details to include in your proposal by restoration activity, as well as recommended details to include for feasibility and design projects only). For projects with multiple sites, does the proposal include sufficient detail about the proposed work at each site to assess the merit of the planned activities? (8 points)

0 – proposal provides negligible detail (as described in section IV.B) regarding restoration actions, project(s) status, and key milestones; 4 – proposal provides moderate detail (as described in section IV.B) regarding restoration actions, project(s) status, and key milestones; 8 – proposal provides extraordinary detail (as described in section IV.B) regarding restoration actions, project(s) status, and key milestones.

(c) Sustainability of Restoration Approach: How great is the potential of the restoration effort to be sustainable and provide lasting benefits of regional or national significance for the species targeted by the project and its habitat? Is there evidence that the applicant has chosen the most self-sustaining restoration technique that accomplishes the project's goals and/or evidence that habitat impacts will not re-occur? To what extent does the proposal describe the susceptibility of the project site to climate change impacts and how the proposed restoration methodology and design provides for resilience to extreme weather events and adaptation to potential climate change impacts anticipated at the project site? (8 points)

0 – project is not sustainable and will not provide lasting benefits for target species; 4 – project is sustainable and will potentially provide lasting benefits for target species; 8 – project is sustainable and will provide lasting benefits for target species, and the design provides for resilience to extreme weather events and adaptation to potential climate change impacts.

(d) Project Assessment: To what extent will the project measure near-term implementation success following requirements in Section IV.B including ecological targets that can be evaluated within approximately one-year post implementation and/or the use of parameters described in NOAA RC Implementation Monitoring (Tier I) Guidance for projects that include one of the primary RC restoration methods? For restoration feasibility and design proposals, is the proposed pre-restoration monitoring aligned with the requirements? See the NOAA RC Implementation Monitoring (Tier 1) Guidance for more information: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants#restoration-monitoring-and-data-management>. (2 points)

0 – proposal does not include plans for monitoring near-term implementation success; 1 – proposal includes a satisfactory monitoring plan, as outlined in Section IV.B.; 2 – proposal includes a well-described monitoring plan following requirements in Section IV.B. Projects that include one of the RC primary restoration methods strictly follow the NOAA RC Implementation Monitoring (Tier I) Guidance.

(e) Landowner Support: Is there substantiated landowner/land manager support and commitment to the project documented within the application (e.g., a support letter)? (1 point).

0 – proposal does not provide documentation of landowner/land manager support; 1 – proposal provides documentation of landowner/land manager permission to implement the project.

(f) Data Management Plan: Does the proposal include a Data Management Plan, including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information 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? If no data will be collected through the project, the applicant must clearly explain the rationale for the lack of data collection in order to receive full points. See pages 3 - 5 in the NOAA RC Implementation Monitoring (Tier 1) Guidance for a template and more information: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/monitoring-and-evaluation-restoration-projects>. (1 point)

0 – proposal does not provide a Data Management Plan; 1 – proposal provides a complete and well-detailed Data Management Plan.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 10
--	---------------------------

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Restoration and Conservation Background: Does the applicant have the capacity and knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing, and effectively managing and overseeing projects? Otherwise, does the applicant demonstrate an ability to collaborate with stakeholders and other partners? (5 points)

0 – proposal provides no documentation of experience in conducting the scope and scale of proposed work; 2.5 – proposal provides documentation of adequate capacity and knowledge to conduct the proposed work; 5 – proposal provides documentation of substantial capacity and expert knowledge to conduct the proposed work.

(b) Management Capacity: Does the applicant possess and describe the necessary experience, facilities, equipment, and administrative resources available to successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing a federal grant award? Does the proposal describe the applicant's ability and the plan for managing a significant number of projects simultaneously (as relevant), including financial and administrative management of sub-awards and timely submission of project-specific progress reports and deliverables? Does the applicant include a plan for coordination with NOAA to implement the project(s)? (5 points)

0 – proposal provides no description of experience or available resources to manage the award; 2.5 – proposal describes adequate experience and available resources to manage the award; 5 – proposal describes extensive experience with federal grants, demonstrates capacity for managing a significant number of simultaneous projects (as relevant), and includes a plan for coordination with NOAA to implement the project(s).

4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 10
-------------------------	---------------------------

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Cost-benefit Comparison: Has the applicant demonstrated that a significant benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame? If funds are requested for partial support of a larger project or for a project with multiple sites or phases, the proposal should include the full project budget and/or a budget for each site or project phase to place the funding request in spatial and temporal context. (5 points)

0 – proposal does not provide a reasonable cost-benefit comparison; 2.5 – project is likely to be reasonably cost-effective for anticipated benefit; 5 – project is likely to be extraordinarily cost-effective for anticipated benefit.

(b) Budget Detail: Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF-424A object classes) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications? Does the budget clearly outline the NOAA funding request and other funding sources, noting whether the other funding sources are non-federal or federal, match or leverage? Multi-year or multi-phase award requests should include annual/interim milestones that correspond to logical funding request increments. (3 points)

0 – proposal does not provide a realistic budget; 1.5 – proposal provides an adequately detailed budget with realistic cost estimates; 3 – proposal provides an extraordinarily detailed budget with realistic cost estimates.

(c) Cost-sharing and Leveraging Funds. To what extent will the applicant complement NOAA’s investment with other funding sources, including formal, non-federal matching contributions and/or informal leverage? Confirmed matching and/or leveraged funding sources should be documented in the Supplemental Materials. Note whether the other funding sources are non-federal or federal, and whether the funds are secured or pending. (2 points)

0 – budget does not include any formal, non-federal matching contributions or informal, leveraged funds; 1 – budget includes formal, non-federal matching contributions and/or informal, leveraged funds, with a combined total that is less than a 1:1 ratio of matching or leveraged funds to NOAA funds; 2- budget includes formal, non-federal matching contributions and/or informal, leveraged funds, with a combined total that meets or exceeds a 1:1 ratio of matching or leveraged funds to NOAA funds.

5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.</p> <p>For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:</p> <p>(a) Stakeholder Engagement and Support: Does the proposed project(s) include a wide base of stakeholder and community support that demonstrates the restoration effort has been put forward by common agreement, preferably through inclusion in a public planning process? Has or will the applicant engage with a diverse range of groups, including underserved communities, either directly or in collaboration with a local partner (including through contracts and subawards), to engage a variety of organizations such as community associations, local environmental justice organizations, business/agricultural groups, adjacent landowners, state and local governments, and/or members of Congress? (5 points)</p> <p>0 – proposal does not demonstrate community support or common agreement; 2.5 – proposal demonstrates adequate community support through a diverse set of partners; 5 – proposal demonstrates extraordinary community support through a diverse set of partners, with evidence of common agreement through a public planning process.</p> <p>(b) Community Outreach: Does the proposal include an outreach strategy to disseminate information about restoration goals and results to a broad audience? The strategy may include, but is not limited to: informal education and mentoring for conservation corps, interns, or early career professionals from underrepresented groups in relevant science and policy careers; opportunities for press visits; or other outreach that encourages support for restoration and environmental stewardship. (5 points)</p> <p>0 – proposal does not include an outreach strategy as it pertains to dissemination of information about project goals and results; 2.5 – proposal includes an adequate outreach strategy as it pertains to dissemination of information about project goals and results; 5 – proposal includes an extraordinary outreach strategy as it pertains to dissemination of information about project goals and results and has strong potential to encourage future habitat restoration and protection actions.</p>	

Evaluation Criteria

Review and Selection Process

All applications received by each annual deadline will undergo an initial administrative screening to determine if they are responsive, eligible, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. If an application was submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline but the application was not validated by NOAA's eRA grants management system, the applicant should contact the competition managers, Rina Studds and Julie Simmons, immediately, or at least within one business day, for troubleshooting with the system. Applications are screened to ensure that they are responsive to this announcement; the applicant is eligible to apply; and includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B Content and Form of Application. If an application is submitted early and time and resources permit, NOAA may notify an applicant of administrative defects (e.g., missing material) in its application, so that the applicant may re-submit it; however, this is not assured, and is at the sole discretion of NOAA.

Eligible applications will undergo a technical review and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this solicitation and the mission and goals of NOAA. Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the Evaluation Criteria listed in Section V.A. After the technical review, a panel may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official regarding which proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A and I.B). The panel will be comprised of federal employees and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

If convened, the panel will be presented with the top applications, per the results of the technical review. Panelists will also receive the technical review scores and comments for each application. The panel will rate all top-ranked proposals on the following scale:

- 1 – Fair: application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A and I.B;
- 2 – Good: application adequately addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A and I.B;
- 3 – Excellent: application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A and I.B.

If a panel is held, the panel's list will be considered by the Selecting Official for recommending applications for funding. If a panel is not held, the technical review ranking will be considered by the Selecting Official for recommending applications for funding.

If an application is recommended for funding, staff from the NOAA will contact the applicant to negotiate a final application package. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. In the event further funding becomes available after the initial selection, NOAA may select additional proposals without repeating the competitive process.

Awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. NOAA may choose to award partial funding as part of a multi-year award. Once funds are awarded, recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years for the same award. NOAA expects, but is not obligated, to provide additional funding to multi-year awards in subsequent years. In this case, a budget narrative and SF-424A that identifies each separate year of requested funding will be required prior to an award offer.

Adding funds to multi-year awards is contingent on the availability of funds and satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of NOAA. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA program staff. The NOAA Grants Officer makes the final approval decision and issues an award, as described in Section VI.A. and B. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

In addition, the NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through the System for Award Management. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be addressed in a timely fashion in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.208. In addition, 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, a NOAA program executive or designee, will recommend applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or e) by project types;
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A and I.B;
5. An applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
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 NOAA GMD.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Applicants that submitted applications by the annual due date will receive notification that their application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA GMD by the start of the subsequent fiscal year, October 1. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2025.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

PRE-AWARD COSTS. 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 C.F.R. § 200.460). NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not 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 or cooperative 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.

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS. 2024 Revisions to 2 CFR 200 will be in effect for awards issued through this competition.

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, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, 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 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 materials¹ 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.

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 additives² —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 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

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.

Recipients will be obligated to assist NOAA in complying with all relevant requirements and implementing guidance issued to federal agencies by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). NOAA anticipates additional guidance may be forthcoming related to responsibilities of recipients of grants and cooperative agreements, including guidance on agency-wide or government-wide requirements.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing and FAQs about this Announcement can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants>. For further information contact Rina Studds by e-mail at rina.studds@noaa.gov or phone (301) 427-8651 and Julie Simmons by email at julie.simmons@noaa.gov or by phone (734) 680-5671. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center staff before submitting an application to discuss their NOAA project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.