Information Sheet
FY25 NOAA/OAR/WPO/Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Competition

The WPO Social Science Program (SSP) will support research in the FY25 social, behavioral, and economic sciences (SBES) competition in the following three primary research priorities: community responses to weather, behavioral responses to hazardous weather events, as well as data, forecasts, and societal outcomes. Each of these priorities is further described in the NOFO program priorities. The SSP is committed to supporting an inclusive research portfolio that addresses a diversity of hazards impacting communities across the full geographic extent of the United States and its territories. While studies from all regions are welcome, those that support research in the U.S. territories as well as in the western (including Alaska and Hawaii) and mid-western states of the US are strongly encouraged.

The social, behavioral, and economic sciences or SBES, are critical components for meeting NOAA's mission. By finding, funding, and fostering high-quality and innovative SBES research, the Weather Program Office (WPO) Social Science Program (SSP) supports NOAA's Research and Development (R&D) Vision Areas (2020–2026) to investigate critical research questions and integrate SBES into products, tools, and services that improve weather and air quality forecasting and societal outcomes. This program strongly encourages and supports SBES-led interdisciplinary work, applied research, and SBES research that advances theoretical findings into applications for the operational forecast community.

Elaboration of Science Emphases:

While there is growing interest in SBES research to improve forecast communication and develop specific products, there has been less focus on research-related infrastructure to collectively advance the needs of the research community and support SBES integration at the organizational level (See NASEM, 2018).

The FY25 SBES funding call intends to nurture SBES integration by focusing on methods, constructs, and the transfer of knowledge through research-guided recommendations. The range of disciplines covered by SBES provide a diversity of methodologies through which data may be collected and analyzed to understand the SBES program priorities presented in this NOFO. These methods include both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques such as network analyses, computational modeling, surveys, case studies, ethnographies, and more.

Additional Information on Proposal Evaluation and Submission:

Project Outputs

WPO's SSP recognizes projects have many possible applications and research outputs, such as providing research-guided recommendations, transferring methodologies, informing and/or creating a tool or technology, and using newfound knowledge to enhance a product or service. These applications may be relevant across the Weather Enterprise. However, Principal

Investigators (PIs) should be aware that reviewers will examine the applicability and relevance of their proposed research to NOAA. Therefore, SSP encourages proposals to identify *all* possible research applications (e.g., for NWS, private weather industry, and/or other researchers), while focusing on primary research output(s) that may benefit NOAA.

Readiness Levels

Information about project Readiness Levels, often referred to as "RLs" can be found on the NOAA Office for Research, Transition, and Application webpage and are also described in the General Information Sheet. Research projects appropriate for this funding call range from early applied research (lower RLs) to mature stages of demonstration (higher RLs), and the same proposal may span multiple RLs if multiple methodologies are being proposed. The extent to which research results can be extrapolated to the relevant population(s) in real-world settings informs the project's RL. The SSP uses RLs to evaluate project maturity, *not* to judge the "correctness" of a PI's RL assessment. The SSP recognizes research and development takes time, and as such, does not expect projects to progress through all readiness levels in a two-year project period. Please use the following links for more information on NOAA's Policy on Research and Development Transitions (NAO 216-105B) and this handbook for definitions.

Note. SSP-funded projects are not required to use a NOAA testbed unless its use is appropriate within the scope of the proposed research methods.

Co-production and Transition Plans

For this NOFO, co-production refers to a process by which researchers work with key individuals who are engaged in the research process to help ensure the research outputs are useful, usable, and eventually put into practice. These individuals may include broadcast meteorologists, emergency managers, community leaders, NWS forecasters, or NWS Headquarters personnel. To enhance the relevance and feasibility of the proposed research, PIs are strongly encouraged to identify opportunities for meaningful engagement with collaborators such as those identified above as part of their research work plan. While not required, partnering with NWS Weather Forecast Offices and/or NWS Headquarters personnel (i.e., operational collaborators) can provide particularly valuable insights, as these entities are often among the primary users of WPO's research outputs. This collaboration ensures that research outputs are not only theoretically sound but also practically applicable and beneficial to practitioners.

If a project is selected for an award, a tangible outcome of the collaboration between researchers and operational collaborators is a transition plan. These plans serve as living documents that describe and facilitate the transition of research and development to practical applications. Per the NAO 216-105B, if a project has potential to progress beyond readiness level (RL) 4, the PI is expected to work alongside their operational collaborators and any additional designated NOAA/NWS Point of Contact to co-develop a transition plan within the first six months of the project period. Therefore, for projects beginning at RL > 4, PIs are strongly encouraged, but not required, to have an NOAA/NWS Operational Collaborator. For projects RL < 4, PIs are still encouraged to have an NOAA/NWS Operational Collaborator to consider the value and feasibility of their R&D to operations.

All identified funded and unfunded collaborators should be included in the project narrative of your LOI and full proposal. Before adding their name(s) to your LOI and proposal materials, please reach out to them ahead of time to verify their interest and availability. While no official collaboration form is required, unless you plan to work with a NOAA testbed (see Section IV.D.3 of the WPO FY25 NOFO for more information), any federal collaborator(s) named in a proposal requesting *allowable* funding **will** need to provide a Request for NOAA Federal Support to accompany the proposal submission documentation (see Section IV.D.3 of the WPO FY25 NOFO for more information).

SBES Data and Data Management

As stated in the Data Sharing Plan in the WPO FY25 NOFO (section IV.F.j. and VI.B.), all data collected must be accessible to the general public, typically within two years. PIs can satisfy data sharing requirements by submitting socio-economic data to a publicly accessible data archiving platform or repository approved by the funding program. Two examples of repositories used by SBES researchers include, but are not limited, to Converge/DesignSafe-CI and Harvard Dataverse; please review SSP guidance on data repositories for identifying additional appropriate platforms. SSP highly recommends publishing *both* data and associated instruments, if appropriate.

SSP suggests proposals include the following information in their Data Management Plan:

- Type of data to be collected and shared;
- Procedures for managing, storing, and maintaining the confidentiality of the data to be collected and shared;
- Roles and responsibilities of project or institutional staff in the management and retention of research data;
- Expected schedule for data sharing such that data is publicly accessible, in a timely fashion (typically within 2 years);
- Format of the final electronic dataset (i.e., metadata schema);
- Documentation to be provided;
- Location of data sharing (i.e.,, the intended data archive/repository); and
- Any circumstances that prevent either all or some of the data from being shared. This includes data that may fall under multiple statutes and hence must meet confidentiality requirements for each applicable statute (e.g., data covered by Common Rule for Protection of Human Subjects, FERPA, and HIPAA).

Additional information on Project Budgets and Timelines:

Project duration may not exceed two years; however, projects may have shorter timelines. For example, projects analyzing previously collected data may only require six months to a year, while research encompassing survey development, deployment, and analysis may require the full two year period. PIs need to be aware that reviewers will closely examine the proposed budgets in relation to the proposed scope of work.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) / Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) Process

If an award recipient uses agency sponsorship in any collection of information from the public, the recipient must obtain Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance as required by The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995. For example, sponsorship may include NOAA disseminating surveys on behalf of award recipients, either directly or through a NOAA social media account. If a PI is unsure whether their project requires OMB clearance, the PI should budget ample time for clearance in their proposal and if awarded, NOAA staff can help determine whether OMB clearance is necessary. If a funded project is determined by NOAA to require OMB clearance, the award recipient will work with their operational collaborator/NWS point of contact (POC) and the NWS OMB PRA liaison (nws.pra@noaa.gov). The award recipient must obtain OMB clearance before collecting information. Because OMB clearance can take anywhere from one week to nine months, the process for obtaining OMB clearance should begin as soon as possible. For additional information on the OMB/PRA process, please see the following resources guide to the Paperwork Reduction Act and Frequently Asked Questions.

Differences from other WPO Funding Opportunities:

Social science transcends all NOAA scientific missions and thus may have application to all WPO funding opportunities. However, not all research is suitable for the funding associated with the FY25 SBES competition as described in this NOFO. Please note, the program priorities for this SBES competition (see Section I.A.1. of the WPO FY25 NOFO) differ from those of the other WPO competitions detailed in this NOFO.

Letters of intent (LOI) are strongly encouraged for proposals submitted to this competition (see Section IV.E. of the WPO FY25 NOFO).

Competition Contact Information
WPO Social Science Program Manager: Alison Krepp (oar.wpo.nofocompetition@noaa.gov)