

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

OAR Ocean Acidification Program (OAP)

Funding Opportunity Title

Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessments for Ocean and Coastal Acidification (RVA OA25)

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-OAR-OAP-2025-28235

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.017

Dates

- **Informational Webinar 9/27/24:** A webinar outlining required proposal elements and the review process will take place on Friday, September 27th at 3pm Eastern Standard Time. This will be recorded and posted to the NOAA Ocean Acidification Program’s website, for those who are unable to attend. Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1866312576649519451>
- **Optional Virtual Workshop 10/9/24:** On October 9th at 1pm Eastern Standard Time, there will be a virtual workshop featuring project teams from previously funded Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessments. This workshop is open to the public. The goals of this workshop are: 1) to hear from previously-funded Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessments on lessons learned and next steps; 2) to address common challenges (such as engagement with Indigenous communities, Tribes, and/or other interested groups; working in data-poor regions; and building interdisciplinary teams); and 3) to facilitate networking and collaborations between current Principal Investigators and new interested partners. The meeting will be held on GoToWebinar; register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1071610861236823642>.
- **Optional Office Hours 10/18, 11/15, 12/20 & 1/17:** OAP program staff will hold monthly virtual office hours to address applicant questions. Office hours will be held from 3-4pm Eastern Standard Time once a month on the third Friday of each month in October, November, December and January. See below for specific dates and access information:
 - Friday, October 18th, 2024: meet.google.com/kgv-setk-nff

- Friday, November 15th, 2024: meet.google.com/ehm-pppg-vze
- Friday, December 20th, 2024: meet.google.com/wod-decf-oik
- Friday, January 17th, 2025: meet.google.com/syd-ofud-yvq
- **Required Letters of Intent Due 11/20/24:** Letters of Intent are required in order to be considered for proposal submission and are due no later than 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time on November 20, 2024. LOIs received after that date and time will not be accepted. We anticipate that feedback from the LOIs will be sent four weeks later.
- **Required Proposals Due 3/5/25:** Full proposal submissions are due no later than 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time on March 5, 2025. We anticipate that a review of full proposals will be completed during Spring 2025. September 1, 2025, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals. Applicants will be notified of their status in June of 2025. All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in Section IV (Application & Submission Information) below. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in proposals being returned to the submitter.

Funding Opportunity Description

The NOAA Ocean Acidification Program is requesting proposals for collaborative projects that synthesize ocean and coastal acidification information at a regional scale. This announcement specifically addresses priorities for how ocean and coastal acidification - in the context of changing ocean conditions - affects dependent human communities (the human dimensions of ocean and coastal acidification). This includes the identification and engagement of interested partners and groups, the assessment of their needs, and the generation of products and tools that support management, adaptation, and resilience to ocean and coastal acidification. These projects should provide actionable information to decision makers and/or bolster the resilience of the nation's economy by determining where societal vulnerabilities to ocean and coastal acidification exist or are emerging. This funding opportunity will only support the collection of social science data. Synthesis of existing data in other fields is strongly encouraged. Funding is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2025 Federal appropriations. Projects funded under this announcement will have a September 1, 2025 start date. Approximately 1–6 projects for up to 3 years in duration are expected to be funded at the level of approximately \$100,000 - \$400,000 per year per proposal. It is anticipated that a total of up to \$3 million may be available in FY25 to support the first year of these projects.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA's mission is to understand changes in the world's oceans, share that knowledge, and conserve coastal and marine ecosystems. NOAA's Ocean Acidification Program (OAP) was established by the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring (FOARAM) Act. OAP plays an integral role in NOAA's mission by monitoring changes in ocean chemistry, measuring the biological response of ecologically and economically important species, assessing the socioeconomic impacts of ocean and coastal acidification, investigating adaptation and mitigation strategies to increase resilience, promoting educational opportunities; engaging in national public outreach activities; and coordinating relevant activities with other agencies and international science bodies.

The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has been rapidly increasing for over 250 years, since the onset of the Industrial Revolution. The world's oceans act as a sink for a portion of the carbon dioxide emitted by humans, and this absorption is causing significant changes in ocean chemistry including a reduction in surface ocean pH, otherwise known as ocean and coastal acidification, or OCA. A growing number of laboratory experiments have demonstrated that OCA adversely affects many marine organisms. OCA has the potential to seriously threaten the future health of the world's oceans and the ecosystem services it provides, thus it is critical to determine vulnerabilities and develop mitigation and adaptation strategies to increase resilience.

To address OCA and concerns about possible ecological, economic, and societal impacts, the U.S. Congress enacted the FOARAM Act in 2009. The FOARAM Act requires NOAA to respond to this pressing issue through research and monitoring. In recent legislation, the US Congress also tasked NOAA with providing technical assistance to socioeconomically vulnerable States, local governments, Tribal governments, communities and industries impacted by OCA to support their development of mitigation strategies. In partnership with the OA Alliance, many states have created [state-specific OCA action plans](#) and/or passed legislation to understand the impacts of OCA on their resources.

The federal government identifies its priorities for national and regional OCA research in the [Second Strategic Plan for Federal Research and Monitoring of Ocean Acidification](#). This announcement specifically addresses the priorities listed in Theme 5, the Assessment of Socioeconomic Impacts and Development of Strategies to Conserve Marine Organisms and Ecosystems.

NOAA identifies its priorities for research in the [NOAA Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Acidification Research Plan: 2020-2029](#). This announcement specifically addresses priorities for how OCA - in the context of changing ocean conditions - affects dependent human communities. This includes the identification and engagement of interested partners and groups, the assessment of their needs, and the generation of products and tools that support management, adaptation, and resilience to OCA.

A list of previously funded Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability (RVA) projects can be found on [OAP's website](#). In 2021, OAP hosted a virtual workshop to bring together funded RVA project teams to discuss plans for FY20 projects and hear lessons learned and results from projects wrapping up the first round of FY17 funding. The workshop report can be accessed [here](#).

In 2023, the Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification (IWG-OA) released a national [Ocean Chemistry Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment](#). In this assessment, it was determined that advances in social science research will improve understanding of community vulnerabilities to OCA. The recommendations across regions included: collecting and synthesizing additional socioeconomic data; improving social-ecological models; developing social indicators relevant to OCA; researching factors that increase sensitivity to impacts from OCA; and considering OCA in the context of other social stressors.

Guiding terms and phrases:

These terms are defined in the IWG-OA Vulnerability Assessment:

Vulnerability represents the intersection between an organism's or system's exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity to an environmental stressor.

Ecosystem Vulnerability can be thought of as the exposure of marine ecosystems to OCA, the biological response or sensitivity of species and ecosystems to OCA, and the ability of species and ecosystems to cope or adjust to OCA as a stressor. Other co-occurring stressors could include phenomena like hypoxia, sedimentation, and harmful algal blooms.

Social Vulnerability can be described using a similar framework, where exposure is the impact to marine resources in a coastal community, sensitivity is related to the social and economic dependence on these affected marine resources, and adaptive capacity is the ability to prepare for, adjust to, and cope with the impacts from OCA.

Exposure refers to the extent that biophysical, social, and economic systems or organisms are exposed to a stressor.

Sensitivity is defined as the degree that biophysical, social, and economic systems or organisms are prone to stress and effects by a stressor.

Adaptive Capacity refers to the biophysical, social, and economic systems or organism's ability to prepare for, adjust, and cope with a stressor.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:

(Climate) Vulnerability is defined as "the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude and rate of climate change and variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity and its adaptive capacity".

As defined by the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit:

Resilience is "the capacity of a community, business, or natural environment to present, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption".

Guiding Documents:

About OAP: *Why is OCA important, and what are we doing about it?*

- [OAP website](#)
- [Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Acidification Research Plan: 2020-2029](#)

Previously-funded RVAs: *What kinds of projects like this have been previously funded?*

- [OAP Human Dimensions webpage](#) (including funded projects)
- [The Ocean Acidification Regional Vulnerability Assessment Workshop Report](#)

National documents: *What guides our priorities on a national level?*

- [Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification's Ocean Chemistry Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment](#)

- [Strategic Plan for Federal Research and Monitoring of Ocean Acidification](#)
- [The US Ocean Acidification Action Plan](#)
- [NOAA Research and Development Vision Areas 2020-2026](#)

Working Together: *What communities of practice are there?*

- [Coastal Acidification Networks](#)

Other NOAA Initiatives: *What other initiatives are relevant to this funding opportunity?*

- [NOAA Fisheries Climate Vulnerability Assessments](#)
- [NOAA Climate Program Office Climate and Fisheries Adaptation Program](#)
- [NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Marine Protected Area Climate Vulnerability Assessment Guide](#)
- [NOAA Fisheries Social Indicators of Fishing Community Vulnerability and Resilience in the U.S](#)
- [NOAA National Coral Reef Monitoring Program Socioeconomic Indicators for US Coral Reef Jurisdictions](#)
- [NOAA National Coral Reef Monitoring Program: Understanding Socioeconomic Connections](#)
- [NOAA Carbon Dioxide Removal Research Strategy](#)

The Ocean Acidification Information Exchange: *How can I make connections with other researchers interested in partnering together on this proposal?*

- To facilitate matchmaking and collaborations across disciplines at the proposal development stage, there is a “NOAA OAP Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessments” Team on the OA Info Exchange. [The OA Information Exchange](#) is an online community for professionals involved with or interested in OCA. By joining at no cost, you can post updates and comments with questions, answers, or announcements, share papers and presentations, join teams based on regions and topics of interest, and network with people from a variety of fields. To learn more and join [the RVA Team](#), see here (*note: you must register an account with the OA Info Exchange to be able to join this team*).

B. Program Priorities

The NOAA/OAR/Ocean Acidification Program (OAP) is soliciting proposals for three types of collaborative projects that synthesize ocean and coastal acidification (OCA) information at a regional-scale (i.e. Large Marine Ecosystem, large estuary or collection of small estuaries, and state or collection of states) to assess where societal vulnerabilities exist or are emerging, in order to provide actionable information for marine resource decision makers and impacted communities in order to build resilience. This information is intended to provide national to local marine resource decision makers (including U.S. Congress, Federal, state, Tribal, and local agencies) with information in order to develop adaptation strategies to OCA and related stressors/impacts affecting ocean and coastal ecosystems, ecosystem services, and the human communities that depend on them. Equipping decision makers with actionable information to develop adaptation strategies, requires the synthesis of disparate types of data (chemical, biological, ecological and social), as well as translation of multi-disciplinary OCA science tailored to support decision-making needs. Projects funded in the prior OAP Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessment NOFO for Option 2 or 3 will receive special consideration if they now apply for Option 1 projects.

Applicants must choose only ONE of the following three project options that best aligns with proposed activities.

Option 1 Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessment (RVA): Proposals submitted under this option should develop an RVA examining the impact of OCA and related stressors on marine ecosystems and human communities, and can include both data synthesis activities and community meetings and/or workshops. Projects may last up to 3 years in duration and not exceed \$400k/yr. Proposers should ensure that the size of the region is scaled to the needs of the intended end users. These assessments should provide information to support adaptation planning for, but not limited to, habitat, species, and ecosystem protection and restoration; fisheries management and other extractive uses of coastal and marine resources; traditional and cultural uses of coastal and marine resources and environments; and coastal community planning for mitigation, resilience, and adaptation. They can be new projects or distinct additions to existing RVAs that wish to carry forward their projects to address remaining gaps or implement findings into resiliency planning efforts. Including a social scientist as a co-Principal Investigator on the proposal is a requirement for Option 1.

Option 2 Data Synthesis Collaboration: Proposals submitted under this option should focus only on conducting data syntheses that are relevant to a future RVA examining the impact of OCA and related stressors on marine ecosystems and human communities. Applicants should identify a user group that will utilize the data synthesis product for the purpose of conducting an RVA and include those users early on in the project work. Alternatively, proposals could describe how the proposed activities and outputs would fit into an RVA. Projects may last up to 2 years and not exceed \$250k/year.

Option 3 Foundational Community Workshop: This option is for regions that have not yet conducted data synthesis activities or established an RVA. The primary outcome of this option is a community workshop or series of small meetings that will inform future RVAs. This workshop should bring together stakeholders from various backgrounds and disciplines (e.g., industry; academia; local, state, tribal, and federal government) to promote interdisciplinary partnerships and discuss what stakeholders would like to see in an RVA. This workshop should also identify research needs/gaps in the region that are needed before a future RVA can be completed. A publication summarizing the outcomes of the workshop must also be produced and made publicly available within one year of the workshop. Projects may last up to 18 months in duration and not exceed \$100k/yr.

Priority Elements

Proposals must address one or more of these priority elements:

1. A clear summary of the information that end users and stakeholders have identified as requirements for sound decision-making related to adaptation to OCA and other stressors or an actionable plan for generating this information by engaging with end users and stakeholders;
2. A plan to effectively structure and employ models and other tools that utilize chemical, climate, biological, ecological, and/or socio-economic information to assess the vulnerability and resilience of marine ecosystems and human communities to scenarios of OCA and related stressors;
3. A plan to generate techniques for presenting multidimensional information on OCA and other stressors that aid in the use of RVAs for adaptation planning and other decision-making purposes;
4. A synthesis of existing data to produce the information and understanding on which RVAs are based; and
5. An assessment of whether current management strategies for coastal and marine resources and communities are robust to scenarios of OCA and related stressors, conduct management strategy evaluations to assess the success of alternative management options under different scenarios of COA and related stressors, and/or identify and test how to effectively insert OCA-related information into management processes.

A single proposal is not required to address all the priority elements listed above. However, understanding the vulnerability and resilience of marine ecosystems and human communities to OCA and related stressors will require the integration of multiple types of data, including social science. Proposals are expected to be interdisciplinary and may include components that address biogeochemistry, ecology, human dimensions, and ecosystem services. End user and stakeholder involvement will be required during the course of the research by, among other activities, including a representative end user of the information generated by the project (e.g., marine resource manager, Sea Grant extension agent, state or local policymaker) as a co-PI. Use of an end user advisory committee to guide the transition of research results toward applications from the outset of the project is encouraged (especially for those applying under Option 1). Models, projections, and visualization tools developed through this announcement should capitalize on NOAA's other investments in OCA and related research, modeling, and observations. NOAA investigators are eligible to apply, however proposals must include participants from outside NOAA. Where appropriate, proposals should show explicit linkages to, and utilization of, wider research, monitoring, and modeling efforts supported through federal, state, or regional entities.

Proposal requirements:

- Proposals must include interdisciplinary collaborations (e.g., between physical, ecological, social, economic scientists; managers/decision makers; industry leaders, etc.), and, if applicable, promote communication and partnerships between different groups to ensure continued use and shared understanding of information generated by the project. To facilitate matchmaking and collaborations between OCA researchers and social scientists at the initial proposal development page, it is recommended (but not required) to join the [“NOAA OAP Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessments” Team](#) on the [OA Information Exchange](#) (*note: you must first register an account with the OA Info Exchange to be able to join this team*).

- Project teams must include a representative end user of the information generated by the project. The ability to produce usable science is greatly enhanced when researchers understand and are responsive to the interests and needs of end users; likewise, the application of knowledge increases when end users understand and acknowledge the capabilities of science to address their management challenges and actively seek to incorporate the research into management plans and decision processes.
- Proposals must clearly describe the process that will be followed to ensure that productive collaboration occurs among the project team and end users, including a mechanism for being adaptive and responsive to the respective input, needs, and capabilities of each.
- Projects must engage end users and other relevant partners and stakeholders throughout the entire project from development through implementation.
- Proposals must include clear plans to communicate the potential consequences of OCA to its targeted end users and stakeholders, and those projects that develop RVAs must include clear plans to deliver recommendations to end users and stakeholders to foster actions that promote resilience consistent with the understanding of marine ecosystem and human community vulnerability to OCA developed by their activities.
- Proposals must identify the data and data synthesis products on which RVAs will be based, outline pathways for developing relevant new data synthesis products, and/or describe the process by which stakeholder needs will define regional needs for RVAs.

Projects developed through this announcement should capitalize on NOAA's other investments in OCA and related research, modeling and observations. [OAP's website](#) provides information about all of its [activities](#), including regional perspectives on OCA.

All proposals are encouraged to collaborate with and/or leverage output from relevant research and decision-making institutions (e.g., non-governmental organizations; academic institutions; state, Tribal, and local governments; private sector organizations; and federal agencies) to the extent this collaboration enhances the effectiveness of the project and its outcomes.

Proposals should justify their work and approaches by reference to one or more of the guiding documents listed at the end of the Program Objective section, or some similar compilation of research needs and approaches within their geographic region.

Proposals should indicate the expected outputs and outcomes of the research, in addition to research activities. Funded proposals will be required to include outputs and outcomes in their progress reports.

This funding opportunity is NOT intended to support the collection of new chemical, biological or ecological observations or species response data. Social science data collection is permitted.

C. Program Authority

Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act 33 U.S.C. 3701-3708

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Approximately 1-6 projects for 1-3 years in duration are expected to be funded at the level of approximately \$100,000 - \$400,000 per year per proposal. It is anticipated that a total of up to \$3 million may be available in FY25 to support the first year of projects. However, there is no appropriation of funds at this time and no guarantee that there will be. Subsequent funding is contingent on the availability of FY 2026 funding and performance under the current award. Highly rated proposals that are unable to be funded in FY25 may be held and funded in FY26 without having to undergo additional competition.

B. Project/Award Period

Applicants may submit multi-year applications covering up to a 3 year period (depending on which Option is chosen) with an anticipated start date of September 1, 2025. Subsequent funding is contingent on the availability of FY 2026 funding and performance under the current award.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected for funding will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of collaboration, participation, or involvement by NOAA in the project. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist. Funding for contractual arrangements for services or products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this notice.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; other nonprofits; commercial organizations; state, local and Tribal governments; and authorized Federal agencies. Applications from non-Federal and Federal applicants will be competed against each other. Proposals selected for funding from non-Federal applicants will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement as described above in section II. C. of this notice. Proposals selected for funding from NOAA scientists shall be effected by an intra-agency fund transfer. Proposals selected for funding from a non-NOAA Federal agency will be funded through an inter-agency transfer. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency in excess of their appropriation. Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from applicants, the Economy Act (31 USC 1535) is not an appropriate legal basis.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or match is required under this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Letters of Intent are required for this announcement. A full proposal that did not submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) will not be considered and will be returned to the proposer without review.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential adverse impact on the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits must be received by the Program Manager prior to funding. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, or whether an Environmental Assessment is necessary in conformance with requirements of the NEPA. For those applications needing an Environmental Assessment, affected applicants will be informed after the peer review stage; and will be requested to assist in the preparation of a draft of the assessment (prior to award). Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis where necessary (e.g. NEPA environmental assessment) will also delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

This solicitation, complete application packages (including required Federal forms) with instructions and the address for submission can be found at www.grants.gov, or by contacting Alexandra Puritz (alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov), (302) 754-1048. Visit the [Resources for Applicants and Grantees](#) section of OAP's website for a [New Application Process Guide](#) created by NOAA Fisheries, partially summarized below.

The Department of Commerce has transitioned their grants management system from Grants Online to eRA Commons. This change requires updates to an organization's application submission process. Any grant application submitted to a Notice of Funding Opportunity in Grants.gov after January 1, 2024 must register for the systems below if the applicant's organization does not already have an active account.

System Registrations: Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. Check with your organization prior to applying to determine if the organization already has active accounts in the systems listed below. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take **4-6 weeks**, so applicants should begin activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet or other technical issues prevent electronic submission, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity to enable submission prior to the deadline. Registration for all three systems is free.

1. **SAM.gov:** Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first register in SAM.gov to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The username and password for SAM.gov are managed by Login.gov. Registration can take 2+ weeks and requires renewal annually. Registration guidance can be accessed [here](#).
2. **Grants.gov:** In order to submit an application, applicant organizations must be registered in Grants.gov. Organizations must register after receiving the UEI from SAM.gov. Registration can take 2-4 weeks. Registration guidance can be accessed [here](#).
3. **eRA Commons:** Prior to submitting in Grants.gov, applicant organizations must first register in eRA Commons. The eRA registration can start while an organization is waiting for their final SAM.gov approval of their UEI. However, the organization must have a complete SAM.gov registration in order to submit the final application. Registration can take up to 4 weeks. eRA Commons registration must be completed by the organization's Signing Official (SO). An SO is someone in the organization with signatory authority, such as a President, Executive Director, Owner, etc. In addition, a Project Director/Principal Investigator account must be created and linked on the SF-424 for a successful submission. Registration guidance can be accessed [here](#). For eRA Commons questions, contact the eRA Service Desk toll free at (866) 504-9552 or (301) 402-7469. The eRA Service Desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 7AM to 8PM Eastern Time (closed on federal holidays).

Submission Checks:

When an application is submitted in Grants.gov, it will undergo two layers of checks. This is a new process with the transition to eRA Commons.

- First check - Grants.gov: Grants.gov will check for an on-time submission and attachments uploaded for each required form in the application package. If your application is successfully submitted in Grants.gov, you will receive a Grants.gov tracking number.
- Second check - eRA Commons: eRA Commons will check for ERRORS and WARNINGS (elements of the application that need to be resolved and resubmitted - such as file formatting or role information). Therefore, a Grants.gov tracking number alone does not verify a successful submission. You must resolve any ERRORS listed and resubmit in Grants.gov prior to the due date in order for NOAA to receive your application for processing. **Applicants cannot consider their application fully received by the agency until they receive an email from eRA Commons confirming application receipt in addition to the Grants.gov tracking number.**

In addition to Grants.gov, this announcement will also be available by contacting the program official identified in Section VII. Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times (Section IV.D.) to help ensure your application is received on time.

B. Content and Form of Application

Letter of Intent (LOI) - due no later than 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time on November 20, 2024. LOIs are required in order to be considered for full proposal submission.

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project and the likelihood of it being funded in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant, however the final decision to submit a full proposal is made by the investigator, regardless of feedback they receive from the LOI process. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the targeted competition. Letters of Intent (LOI) must be submitted to NOAA by emailing a pdf or word document to alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov with the title RVA-OA25 LOI_PI's last name. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length, single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins and should include in order the components listed below.

If all the below components are not included, the LOI risks a delayed response and may not be considered.

1. Project Type – Regional Resiliency & Vulnerability Assessment (Option 1), Data Synthesis Collaboration (Option 2), OR Foundational Community Workshop (Option 3).
2. Tentative project title.
3. Name(s) phone number(s), email address(s) and institution(s) of all Principal Investigator(s), and specification of which individual is the Lead Principal Investigator.
4. Approximate cost of the project by year and overall total.

5. Problem Statement and Response to End User Needs – Describe the regional focus and issue(s) the project will address, discussing the importance and context, with particular emphasis on how the project will address one or more management or community needs. Identify the project end user(s) and describe how the research is designed to meet their needs and how they will be involved in project activities. Describe the process that was used to identify end-user and other community needs. If applicable, briefly describe how the proposed work will leverage the outputs or outcomes of work previously supported by the OAP.
6. Brief summary of work to be completed, methodology to be used, relevant end user group engagement and the plan for coordination with ongoing NOAA and/or other federal agency, state or NGO funded OCA work.

Program Managers from NOAA and other federal agencies will review each LOI to determine whether it is responsive to the Program's goals and priorities, as advertised in this notice. Emails to proposers are scheduled to be sent out four weeks after the due date to encourage or discourage a full application. LOIs from the same region may be asked to combine their proposals. In general, full proposals will be encouraged if they show evidence of application to the program priorities above, clear statements of the problem addressed and the methodologies to be used, understanding of end-user concerns, and strong collaboration with NOAA, a NOAA-related program, or other Federal, Tribal, state or regional management bodies. The final decision to submit a full application will be made by the investigator, regardless of the recommendations of the program manager regarding the LOI. In the feedback, the NOAA program manager may recommend that the proposers change the Option selected, but it is up to the proposers to decide which Option they will apply for in their final proposal.

Late LOIs will not be considered, and any associated full applications will not be accepted.

Applications

The provisions for full application preparation provided here are mandatory. Applications received after the published deadline (refer to DATES) or applications that deviate from the prescribed format may be returned to the sender without further consideration. This funding opportunity will not allow multi-institutional awards (an award granted to more than one recipient institution), but sub-awards through the applicant organization are allowed (a sub-award is an award provided by a pass-through entity to a sub-recipient).

Required Elements: Each application must substantially comply with the following seventeen elements or it may be returned to sender without further consideration. The Summary, Title page, Abstract, Project Description, References, Biographical Sketch, Budget Narrative, Applications to Management, Diversity and Inclusion Statement, and Letter(s) of Support must be single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The seventeen elements are as follows:

1. Standard Form 424. At the time of application submission, all applicants requesting direct funding must submit the Standard Form, SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for their institution for the whole project period. This form is to be the cover page for the original application and is the first required form in the grants.gov application package. A copy of the form can be viewed [here](#).
2. Summary title page with abstract/project summary - one page maximum.
 - The Summary title page identifies the project's title, starting with the acronym: RVA-OA2025.
 - The Principal Investigator's (PI) name and affiliation, phone and Email information.
 - The option (1,2 or 3) the proposal is addressing should be identified on the summary title page.
 - The requested funding amounts for each fiscal year as well as the total requested amount should be listed on the summary title page.
 - Abstract/project summary: The project summary shall include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed. It should be written in the third person and in plain language. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words. Project summaries of funded applications will be posted on the OAP website.
3. Project description. The description of the proposed project must include narratives of the Proposed Research and not be more than 17 pages in length (including up to 2 pages for the applications to management). The Proposed Research Narrative must be thorough and explicitly indicate its relevance to the program goals and scientific priorities by:
 - Identifying the topic that is being addressed by the proposal.

- Describing the proposed scientific objectives and analytical activities in relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and in relation to previous and current work by the proposing principal investigator(s).
 - Discussing how the proposed project supports relevant research and policy mandates (see the Funding Opportunity Description section, Guiding Documents subsection).
 - Identifying the function of each PI. The Lead PI (s) will be responsible for communicating with the Federal Program Manager on all pertinent verbal or written information.
 - All proposals must include a Data Management Plan which is compliant with [NOAA's Public Access to Research Results Plan](#). A detailed data management plan that describes how metadata and data collected as part of the project will be disseminated to the broader community, and will describe plans for longer term archiving of these data. National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) serves as the data management focal point for the OAP via its [Ocean Carbon and Acidification Data System \(OCADS\)](#). All data resulting from OAP-funded projects must be archived and accessible and NCEI is one data archival option. Costs associated with the use of data centers, or data archiving, should be included in the application budget. See the section on the NOAA Data Reporting requirements below (Section VI. C.).
4. The Applications to Management Narrative should establish the connection to relevant resource management needs by explicitly identifying the end user group(s) including evidence of the linkage between the scientific questions and management needs. A management and/or technical advisory committee is required for all projects, regardless of which option the proposal is applying for; for Option 2 (Data Synthesis Collaboration) and Option 3 (Foundational Community Workshop), it is required to have at least one social scientist included in the committee. All proposals should specifically identify direct participation of resource manager(s) as co-Principal Investigators. This narrative should provide the management justification for the research through:
- Articulating the coordination with one or more management entities;
 - Discussing the expected significance of the project to resource management priorities and needs. Specific management targets, with proposed outputs and outcomes, should describe how this project will improve management capabilities. Outputs are defined as products (e.g. publications, models) or activities that lead to outcomes (changes in management knowledge or action). The timeline for achieving outcomes should be included in the Milestone Chart (below).
 - Describing specific activities, such as workshops or development of outreach materials, that will enhance information transfer from project scientists to relevant management entities, other end-users, or the public.
 - Letters of support from Advisory committee members are required, and these letters will not count against the page limit.
5. References cited. Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside the 17-page proposal description.
6. Milestones chart. Provide timelines of major tasks covering the duration of the proposed project.
7. Biographical sketch. All principal and co-investigators must provide summaries of up to 2 pages that include the following:
- A listing of professional and academic credentials and mailing address;
 - A list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant publications. Additional lists of publications, and lectures should not be included;
8. Current and pending support. Describe all current and pending federal financial/funding support for all principal and co-investigators, including unfunded collaborators making a substantial contribution to the research. Continuing grants must also be included. The capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects should be addressed. Therefore, please discuss the percentage of time investigators and collaborators have devoted to other Federal or non Federal projects, as compared to the time that will be devoted to the project solicited under this notice. You must respond to the requirement whether or not you have any current and/or pending support.

9. A list of all applicable permits including IRB approvals that will be required to perform the proposed work. You must respond to this requirement element whether or not permits or IRB approvals are required
10. Accomplishments from Prior Federal Support. If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received federal funding in the past five years for research, information on the award(s) is required. Each PI and co-PI who has received more than one award (excluding amendments) must report on the award most closely related to the proposal. The following information must be provided:
 - The award number, amount and period of support;
 - The title of the project;
 - A summary of the results of the completed work;
 - Publications resulting from the award;
 - A brief description of outputs and outcomes; and
 - As appropriate, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.Reviewers will be asked to comment on the quality of the prior work described in this section of the proposal. You must respond to the requirement whether or not you have accomplishments from prior Federal support.
11. Budget narrative/justification. In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of costs, all applications must include a detailed budget narrative and a justification to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year. Personnel costs should be broken out by named PI and number of months and percentage of time requested per year per PI. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement each year in the milestones chart (see Required Elements (6) Milestone chart). Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs above. The contribution of any personnel to the project goals should be explained. Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Budget narrative guidance can be found [here](#). *Note: This funding opportunity will not allow multi-institutional awards (an award granted to more than one recipient institution), but sub-awards through the applicant organization are allowed (a sub-award is an award provided by a pass-through entity to a sub-recipient).*
 - Sub-awards: Each sub-award must include a separate budget justification/narrative, a separate SF424,CD-511, and signed approval from their institution.
 - Indirect cost rate agreements: It is requested that the indirect rate agreement be provided upon application submission.
 - Permits, accomplishments, Biographical sketches and the collaborators list must also be supplied to the lead institution in order for them to be combined within the lead application information.
12. CD 511. Certification Regarding Lobbying. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov CD511 document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institution. However, these forms submitted through grants.gov as “Optional Documents” must have hard signatures i.e. collaborating institutions sending this form to the lead. A copy of the form can be viewed [here](#).
13. SF 424B. Assurances - Non-Construction Programs. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov SF 424B document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on document from the submitting institutions. However, these forms submitted through grants.gov as “Optional Documents” must have hard signatures i.e. collaborating institutions sending this form to the lead. A copy of the form can be viewed [here](#).
14. Standard Form 424A. All applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form which identifies the budget for each fiscal year of the proposal. Place each fiscal year in separate columns in Section B of page 1 on the SF424A. (Note that this revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF 424A). The budget figures must correspond with the descriptions contained in the proposal. Multi investigator applications using a lead investigator with a sub-award approach must submit an SF-424A for each sub-award. Each sub-award should be listed as a separate item. Provide separate budgets for each sub-award and contractor regardless of the dollar value and indicate the basis for the cost estimates. Describe products/services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Signed approval from the institution of each sub-award and contractor must be provided. A copy of the form can be viewed [here](#).

15. Statement of Diversity and Inclusion: OAP recognizes that it has a particular and unique opportunity to support NOAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion by taking an intentional step that encourages program applicants to consider diversity and inclusion as part of their scientific projects. This action has the potential to make an impact on not only the diversity and inclusion in science at NOAA, but also beyond the agency. In this section, describe how well the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.). Examples could include, but are not limited to, full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
16. Letter(s) of Support. Letter(s) of support should be provided on behalf of partnering institutions; this could be from formal partners (such as sub-awardees) or informal partners (i.e. community groups with whom the project intended to interact). Providing letters of support demonstrates that critical partnerships have already been initiated at the outset of proposal submission. Letters of support do not count against the page limit and letters of support should not include additional information about the project that is not also included in the proposal description.
17. Collaborators List. Provide one list in the form of an Excel spreadsheet that includes all (US and Foreign) collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (principal and co-principal investigators, post-docs, and sub-awardees), complete with corresponding institutions. Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications in the resumes. Collaborators also include those persons with which the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations. Advisees and Advisors do not have a time limit. Advisees are persons with whom the individual investigator has had an association as thesis advisor or postdoctoral sponsor. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not their collaborators). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.
 - o *Note: eRA Commons does not accept formats other than PDF, so please email this Excel spreadsheet directly to Alexandra Puritz (alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov) by the submission deadline, the email timestamp will be used to determine that this element is received on time. Please use OAP's Collaborators List template, which can be found as a resource listed under "Applying for a Notice of Funding Opportunity" on [OAP's website](#).*

Application format and assembly: Applications submitted via Grants.gov should follow the format guidelines below:

Attachments must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format (except for the Collaborators list which should be in Excel format and emailed to Alexandra Puritz at alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov) to maintain format integrity. Please submit the required documents as described below. Follow the instructions found on the Grants.gov website for application submission into the Grants.gov system. All required forms that do not have specific placeholders in the Mandatory Document box must be submitted in the Optional Form box as Other Attachments and labeled with the document name: i.e. budget narrative, project description, milestone chart etc.

Save your completed application package with two different names before submission to avoid having to re-create the package should you experience submission problems. If you experience submission problems that may result in your application being late, send an email to support@grants.gov and call the Grants.gov help desk. Their phone number is posted on the Grants.gov web site. The Program Manager associated with the Notice of Funding Opportunity will use programmatic discretion in accepting applications due to documented electronic submission problems.

Please note: If more than one submission of an application is performed, the last application submitted before the due date and time will be the official version.

It is allowable for applicants to suggest merit reviewers on a page after the Summary Title Page. These forms can be uploaded into the Optional Form box under Other Attachments in Grants.gov.

Multi-institutional submissions are **not** allowed but sub-award submissions are allowed.

Sub-award submissions - SF424A, Budget Justification, SF-424B, CD-511, Current and Pending, may be required.

Signed approval from the institution of each sub-award must be provided. We also request submission of the indirect rate agreement, if applicable. Permits, accomplishments, Biographical sketches and the collaborators list must also be supplied to the lead institution in order for them to be combined within the lead application information.

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

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

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

In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between three-to-five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. To avoid delays, applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching application deadline before registering, logging in, reviewing the application instructions, and applying. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found [here](#). Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their Grants.gov password and SAM database (which now incorporates CCR) registration up-to-date or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov. Note that your CCR username will not work in SAM. You must create a new SAM user account to renew or update your registration. Registration on SAM is a requirement. To obtain additional information and to verify that all required registrations are current, please visit [SAM.gov](#). An institution registration with eRA Commons is also required and may take up to 4 weeks (see below for additional guidance).

If you experience a Grants.gov systems issue (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before the application deadline, please do ALL of the following:

- Print any error message received
- Call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance
- Contact NOAA using the contact information in section VIII. of this NOFO prior to the close of the competition
- Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov

In the event of a confirmed systems issue, NOAA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format prior to the application deadline. Problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to do the following are not considered systems issues:

- Complete the required registrations (including: eRA commons, SAM, Grants.gov)

The Department of Commerce has transitioned their grants management system from Grants Online to eRA Commons. This change requires updates to an organization's application submission process. Any grant application submitted to a Notice of Funding Opportunity in Grants.gov after January 1, 2024 must register for the systems below if the applicant's organization does not already have an active account.

System Registrations: Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. Check with your organization prior to applying to determine if the organization already has active accounts in the systems listed below. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take **4-6 weeks**, so applicants should begin activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet or other technical issues prevent electronic submission, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity to enable submission prior to the deadline. Registration for all three systems is free.

1. **SAM.gov:** Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first register in SAM.gov to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The username and password for SAM.gov are managed by Login.gov. Registration can take 2+ weeks and requires renewal annually. Registration guidance can be accessed [here](#).
2. **Grants.gov:** In order to submit an application, applicant organizations must be registered in Grants.gov. Organizations must register after receiving the UEI from SAM.gov, but can register before or after registering in eRA Commons. Registration can take 2-4 weeks. Registration guidance can be accessed [here](#).
3. **eRA Commons:** Prior to submitting in Grants.gov, applicant organizations must first register in eRA Commons. The eRA registration can start while an organization is waiting for their final SAM.gov approval of their UEI. However, the organization must have a complete SAM.gov registration in order to submit the final application. Registration can take up to 4 weeks. eRA Commons registration must be completed by the organization's Signing Official (SO). An SO is someone in the organization with signatory authority, such as a President, Executive Director, Owner, etc. In addition, a Project Director/Principal Investigator account must be created and linked on the SF-424 for a successful submission. Registration guidance can be accessed [here](#). For eRA Commons questions, contact the eRA Service Desk toll free at (866) 504-9552 or (301) 402-7469. The eRA Service Desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 7AM to 8PM Eastern Time (closed on federal holidays).

Submission Checks:

When an application is submitted in Grants.gov, it will undergo two layers of checks. This is a new process with the transition to eRA Commons.

- First check - Grants.gov: Grants.gov will check for an on-time submission and attachments uploaded for each required form in the application package. If your application is successfully submitted in Grants.gov, you will receive a Grants.gov tracking number.
- Second check - eRA Commons: eRA Commons will check for ERRORS and WARNINGS (elements of the application that need to be resolved and resubmitted - such as file formatting or role information). Therefore, a Grants.gov tracking number alone does not verify a successful submission. You must resolve any ERRORS listed and resubmit in Grants.gov prior to the due date in order for NOAA to receive your application for processing. **Applicants cannot consider their application fully received by the agency until they receive an email from eRA Commons confirming application receipt in addition to the Grants.gov tracking number.**

In addition to Grants.gov, this announcement will also be available by contacting the program official identified in Section VII. Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times (Section IV.D.) to help ensure your application is received on time.

D. Submission Dates and Times

- **LOI Submission Date:** LOIs are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time November 20, 2024. LOIs received after that date and time will not be accepted. Letters of Intent (LOI) must be submitted to the program manager by emailing a PDF or word document to alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov with the title RVA-OA25 LOI_PI's last name. We anticipate that feedback from the LOIs will be sent four weeks later.
- **Full Proposal Submission Date:** Full proposals are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time March 5, 2025. We anticipate that a review of full proposals will be completed during Spring 2025. September 1, 2025, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals. Applicants will be notified of their status in June 2025. All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements listed above in section IV. B. Failure to follow these requirements will result in proposals being returned to the submitter without undergoing review.

Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Once submitted through Grants.gov, eRA does another verification and this may impact your timely submission. Please submit early to avoid missing the deadline due to system errors. *Note: Please view the "New Application Process" guide listed as a resource under "Applying for a Notice of Funding Opportunity" on [OAP's website](#). This guide contains a list of common errors troubleshooting.*

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

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

This NOFO is **NOT** intended to support the collection of new chemical, biological or ecological observations or species response data. Social science data collection is permitted.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

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

The first PD/PI listed on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. Failure to register in the Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

Letters of Intent (LOI) must be submitted to the program manager by emailing a pdf or word document to alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov with the title RVA-OA25 LOI_PI's last name. Completed application packages (including required Federal forms) should be submitted to www.Grants.gov. LOIs received after the due date will not be reviewed. A full proposal that did not submit an LOI will not be considered and will be returned to the proposer without review. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 35
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.</p> <p>This criterion ascertains whether the proposal demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the issue, and clearly articulates and addresses at least one management or stakeholder need. This criterion also assesses the potential impact of the project. All outputs should be feasible and likely to lead to the identified outcomes. This criterion ascertains whether the proposal identifies and clearly articulates how planned outputs will be used within the context of the described management need.</p>	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 35
<p>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.</p> <p>This criterion also addresses whether the approach is appropriate for the problem being addressed, integrates the end user(s), and is likely to produce the planned outputs. Proposals must identify and demonstrate access to appropriate data sources for the planned analyses (30%). This criterion also assesses whether the Data Management Plan ensures that the data collected and/or created will be made available to general users in a timely manner free of charge, or at minimal cost; this includes whether data generated/created will be archived at NCEI and/or another data portal better suited for social science archival (5%).</p>	
3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 15
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.</p>	

This includes whether the applicant/s possesses the appropriate expertise and experience for the proposed technical methods and end user integration. This criterion also considers if the required letters of support for the advisory committee are present and the degree to which they show the potential for co-production of research (10%). Special consideration will be given to previously-funded projects that were Option 2 (Data Synthesis Collaboration) or Option 3 (Foundational Community Workshop), and are now proposing to build upon that work and take the project to the next level as an Option 1 (RVA) or Option 2 (Data Synthesis Collaboration) project (5%).	
4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 5
This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.	
5. Outreach, Education and Diversity	Maximum Points: 10
This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. This criterion also evaluates the Diversity and Inclusion statement	

Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (35%): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. This criterion ascertains whether the proposal demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the issue, and clearly articulates and addresses at least one management or stakeholder need. This criterion also assesses the potential impact of the project. All outputs should be feasible and likely to lead to the identified outcomes. This criterion ascertains whether the proposal identifies and clearly articulates how planned outputs will be used within the context of the described management need.
2. Technical/Scientific Merit (35%): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, whether there are clear project goals and objectives, whether the approach is appropriate for the problem being addressed, integrates the end user(s), and is likely to produce the planned outputs. Proposals must identify and demonstrate access to appropriate data sources for the planned analyses (30%). This criterion also assesses whether the Data Management Plan ensures that the data collected and/or created will be made available to general users in a timely manner free of charge, or at minimal cost; this includes whether data generated/created will be archived at NCEI and/or another data portal better suited for social science archival (5%).
3. Overall Qualification of Applicant/s (15%): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes whether the applicant/s possesses the appropriate expertise and experience for the proposed technical methods and end user integration. This criterion also considers if the required letters of support for the advisory committee are present and the degree to which they show the potential for co-production of research (10%). Special consideration will be given to previously-funded projects that were Option 2 (Data Synthesis Collaboration) or Option 3 (Foundational Community Workshop), and are now proposing to build upon that work and take the project to the next level as an Option 1 (RVA) or Option 2 (Data Synthesis Collaboration) project (5%).
4. Outreach, Education and Diversity (10%): 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 and assesses the Diversity and Inclusion statement.
5. Project Costs (5%): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

Review and Selection Process

Once an application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive applications may be eliminated from further review. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that can easily be rectified or cured. All applications that pass this initial review will be evaluated and scored individually by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review. Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process.

The peer mail reviewers will be individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular applications. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual applications within his or her area of expertise, and score them individually out of 100 based on the review criteria listed above. Reviewers will consider the relative weighting of the evaluation criteria in providing an overall proposal score in the form of an overall rating of Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, or Poor. Proposals rated Excellent will fall among the top 10% of proposals in the subfield and are the highest priority for support. This category should be used only for truly outstanding proposals. Very Good proposals will fall among the top 1/3 of proposals in this subfield; should be supported. Good proposals will fall among the middle 1/3 of proposals in the subfield; worthy of support. Fair proposals will fall among the lowest 1/3 of proposals in the subfield; should not be supported without serious revision. Poor proposals have serious deficiencies; should not be supported.

The peer panel will comprise several individuals, with each individual having expertise in a separate area, so that the panel, as a whole, covers a range of relevant scientific expertise. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals and will use the mail reviews in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals. The peer panel shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and scoring instructions provided above and used by the mail reviewers. The individual peer panelists' scores shall be combined to obtain a numerical ranking of the proposals. If a full review (mail and panel) is conducted, only the panel scores shall be used to rank each proposal. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given by the independent peer mail review or the review panel.

The Program Manager will neither vote or score applications as part of the independent peer review panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the applications other than to ask questions. Those applications receiving an average panel score of "Fair" or "Poor" will not be given further consideration, and applicants will be notified of non-selection. For the applications scored by the reviewers as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good", the Program Manager will (a) create a ranking of the applications to be recommended for funding using the average panel scores; (b) recommend the total duration of funding for each application; and (c) recommend the amount of funds available for each application subject to the availability of fiscal year funds. Recommendations for funding are forwarded from the Program Manager to the Director of the Ocean Acidification Program for the final funding recommendation decision. Recommendations will be made in rank order from the peer-review process unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the selection factors listed below in Section V.C. NOAA reserves the right to negotiate the budget with the applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant removes certain costs, combine budgets into a single application, or change the lead or sub institution. Additionally, NOAA may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NOAA may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application, and may request that applicants combine projects. In addition, applications rated by the panel as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good" that are not funded in the current fiscal period, may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without having to repeat the competitive review process.

Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant.

Selection Factors

Based on the panel review scores and other selection factors, the designated Selecting Official will provide a listing of proposals in rank order along with a justification for their recommendations for proposals to fund to the OAP Director. The OAP Director may justify proposals to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically (we will prioritize funding research in all US regions/sub-regions where full RVAs have not yet been funded: Gulf of Mexico, South East, Great Lakes)
 - b. By type of institution
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research priority
 - 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. Refer to section I.B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the spring of 2025, and funding is expected to begin during September 2025 for most approved projects. September 1, 2025, is to be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

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

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

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

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.

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

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

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

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

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, 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).

Permits

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all permits and approvals from Federal, state, and local governments and private landowners where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits must be received by the Program Manager prior to release of funding. Failure to apply for and obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, or letters of agreement may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding. In some cases, if additional permits and approvals are required after an application is selected, funds may be withheld by the NOAA Grants Officer under a SAC requiring the recipient to submit required permits and approvals.

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted every 6 months and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted 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.

INDIRECT COST:

If an applicant seeks to establish a new indirect cost rate agreement and NOAA would be the cognizant agency, the applicant must submit its indirect cost rate agreement documentation per the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (2019), https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf within 90 days after award start date or those costs will not be allowed. The approval process may take several weeks. The indirect cost rate applications in these cases should be sent by mail or email (separately from the grant application) to:

Jennifer Jackson, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
Email: jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov

For applicants seeking to establish a new indirect cost rate agreement and NOAA would be the cognizant agency, the information that must be provided (separate from the application) to establish an Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is described below:

Submitted by Non-Profits and Commercial Entities

1. A chart showing the organizational structure during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the organization. Please make sure this includes a brief narrative background statement outlining the financial operation of the organization.
2. The basic proposal including all other supporting schedules and financial and statistical information supporting the basic proposal. Any supporting schedules should be cross-referenced to the basic proposal (accounting records and related work papers to support the costs contained in the indirect cost proposal).
 - a. The total costs shown in the basic proposal should also reconcile to the financial statements in the most recent audit report, which should also be provided.
 - b. Reconciliations/Analyzes i. As stated above, detailed reconciliation between the proposal and the financial statements; ii. Adjusted detailed trial balance which agrees to the audited financial statements; iii. Trend Analysis Report - It must itemize expense account line items that support the totals of both direct and indirect expenses, for three years (only two years would be required if the entity has only been in business for two years). Comparisons or trends of the indirect cost rates only will cause your indirect cost proposal to be rejected, until the correctly prepared trend analysis report is received; and iv. Calculations showing how applicable prior year carry-forward amounts were applied to formulate current year's rate submission.
3. A listing of directly awarded grants and contracts by Federal agency, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, dollar amounts separated by direct- indirect-total costs, period of performance, applicable cost principle, and the identification of any cost limitations and special award terms/conditions applicable to each.
4. Cost Policy Statement (e.g. Disclosure Statement) the purpose of which is to establish an unambiguous understanding between the grantee and the Federal Government as to what costs will be charged directly and what costs will be charged indirectly. If a Cost Policy Statement was submitted with last year's proposal and not proposing any changes to the current year's submission, the following suggested language should be included in their transmittal letter when a proposal is submitted: [ABC Organization] hereby confirms that no changes to its accounting practices as set forth in its Cost Policy Statement dated [date] have been made.
5. Statement of Total Costs contains all line items of cost included in the organization's chart of accounts and applicable columns for direct costs (by cost center/activity, Federal grants, non-Federal grants, fundraising, etc.), indirect costs (overhead, G&A, etc.), and unallowable costs (if applicable). These columns should show the type (e.g. labor, travel supplies, etc.) and amount of cost incurred by each activity. The total costs should reconcile to the organization's financial statements. If the reconciliation is not clear, the organization should provide a separate schedule supporting the difference.
6. Statement of Indirect Costs contains all line items of cost included in the indirect cost pool(s), the applicable base(s), and the resulting indirect cost rate(s). The allocation base should be traceable to the organization's total costs. If not clearly traceable, an additional schedule should be provided to support the reconciliation.
7. Specific Personnel Costs includes a list of all volunteers by job title, along with a description of the services they provided to the organization, if significant. Also required is a list of all management level employees, their position descriptions and salaries.
8. Certification of Indirect Costs - A completed Certification must be signed on behalf of the organization by an official at a level no lower than Executive Director or Chief Financial Officer. The Certification must identify the period of coverage for the indirect cost proposal, asserting that it has been prepared in accordance with the applicable cost principles and guidelines [2 CFR Part 200 (non-profits), FAR Part 31 (commercial)].
9. Identification of Other Items to be included within the indirect cost proposal package. If these items are not provided with the organization's proposal, it may be necessary for them to be provided later during the review process as circumstances dictate.
 - a. Identify assets purchased with Federal sponsored program funds or Non-Federal sponsored program funds, if any, and specify if ownership remains with sponsoring entity or transfers to recipient upon successful completion of the awards.
 - b. Identify all related party transactions.
 - c. Identify idle facilities, if any.
10. Lobbying Certificate – A completed Certification must be signed on behalf of the organization by an official at a

level no lower than Executive Director or Chief Financial Officer. Completion of this Certification indicates the organization has complied with the requirements and standards on lobbying costs in the development of the indirect cost rate. 11. DOC's Indirect Cost Proposal Checklist. Please mark the Checklist item number on the corresponding document (or start of section) within the final proposal package. Follow this link to view a copy of the IDC Proposal Checklist,

https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/tip/doc_indirect_cost_rate_program_guidelines_for_grantee_organizations_june_2011.pdf

Submitted by States and Local Government and Indian Tribe

All entities receiving this Guidance desiring to claim indirect costs under Federal awards using an indirect cost rate must prepare and maintain their completed indirect cost rate proposal for review, as set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Grants.

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.

VII. Agency Contacts

OAP point of contact for technical and grant related matters: Alexandra Puritz, Portfolio Manager, phone: (302) 754-1048, email: alexandra.puritz@noaa.gov; Erica Ombres, Program Manager, phone: (301) 734-1072, email: erica.h.ombres@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

- A webinar outlining required proposal elements and the review process will take place on Friday, September 27th at 3pm Eastern Standard Time. This will be recorded and posted to OAP's website, for those who are unable to attend. Register [here](#).
- On October 9th at 1pm Eastern Standard Time, there will be a virtual workshop featuring project teams from previous OAP-funded Regional Vulnerability Assessments. This workshop is open to the public. The goals of this workshop are: 1) To hear lessons learned and results from projects wrapping up, 2) To learn from current projects as new project teams are considering applying to this funding opportunity, and 3) To facilitate networking and collaborations, both across existing projects and for new potential projects. The meeting will be held on GoToWebinar; register [here](#).
- OAP staff will hold monthly virtual office hours to address applicant questions. Office hours will be held from 3-4pm Eastern Standard Time once a month on the third Friday of each month in October, November, December and January. See below for specific dates and access information:
 - Friday, October 18th, 2024: meet.google.com/kgv-setk-nff
 - Friday, November 15th, 2024: meet.google.com/ehm-pppg-vze
 - Friday, December 20th, 2024: meet.google.com/wod-decf-oik
 - Friday, January 17th, 2025: meet.google.com/syd-ofud-yvq