

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

Fisheries Headquarters Program Office (FHQ)

Funding Opportunity Title

FY25 Saltonstall-Kennedy Full Proposal Competition

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2025-26868

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.427

Dates

Full-proposals must be received at <https://www.Grants.gov> under the competition link named “FY25 Saltonstall-Kennedy Full Proposal Competition”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Time, November 25, 2024, 60 days after the posting date of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 10 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. You must have submitted a pre-proposal application by July 23, 2024, in response to Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2025-26840 in order to submit a full proposal under the current NOFO.

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

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov). Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently. See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on registration requirements. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

When developing your full application submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through the www.grants.gov website. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays.

The Grants.gov and eRA Commons validation processes for a submitted application can take up to two business days after submission. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and destroyed.

Funding Opportunity Description

The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act established a fund (known as the S-K fund) used by the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects addressing aspects of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated business infrastructures (see section IV, F; Funding Restrictions). Under this authority, grants and cooperative agreements are made on a competitive basis (subject to availability of funding) to assist in carrying out projects to expand domestic and foreign markets related to U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries.

The term “U.S. fisheries” refers to any marine fishery (including the Great Lakes) that encompasses commercial, recreational, charter, subsistence, wild capture, and aquaculture that is, or may be, engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States or other eligible applicants. The objective of the S-K Research and Development Program, referred to throughout this document as the S-K Competitive Grant Program, is to promote U.S. fisheries by assisting the fishing community to address marketing and research needs.

The term “fishing community” means harvesters, marketers, growers, processors, recreational fishermen, charter fishermen, fishermen, and persons providing them with goods and services.

Proposals submitted to this competition must address at least one of the following priorities: Promotion, and Marketing; Development, Infrastructure and Capacity Building; Science or Technology that Enhances Sustainable U.S. Fisheries. This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) includes information on application requirements and criteria for proposals requesting a maximum of \$500,000 in Federal funding for up to a two-year period. Matching funds are not required, nor will they be considered during the evaluation process. Awards are anticipated to start no earlier than September 1, 2025.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOTE: Submission requirements in this NOFO may change from previous year's announcements.

The S-K Program recommends reading the full announcement carefully, paying close attention to Section IV Application and Submission Information, for changes to application submission requirements. The objectives of the S-K Program and, therefore, the funding priorities for the S-K Grant Competition, have changed over the years since the program began in 1980. The program has evolved as Federal fishery management laws and policies and research needs have evolved in response to changing circumstances.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires fishery managers to undertake efforts to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished fisheries, ensure conservation, minimize by-catch, protect essential fish habitats, and realize the full potential of U.S. fishery resources. It further requires that the Federal government take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities; provide for the sustained participation of such communities; and, to the extent possible, minimize the adverse economic impacts of conservation and management measures on such communities.

The objective of the S-K Research and Development Program, referred to throughout this document as the S-K Competitive Grant Program, is to promote U.S. fisheries by assisting the fishing community to address marketing and research needs.

NMFS seeks applications that demonstrate direct benefits to U.S. fisheries and meaningful participation of fishing communities. The S-K Grant Competition is open to applicants from a variety of sectors, including individuals, industry, academia, and state, local, and Indian Tribal governments.

B. Program Priorities

Applications shall address one or more of the three priorities listed below. However, a singular research priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal should be identified and will be used by NMFS for review purposes. These priorities are aimed at promoting and developing United States fisheries by growing awareness of and demand for products made from U.S. fishery resources, improving infrastructure, ensuring sustainable harvest and seafood supply, and supporting vibrant recreational fishing opportunities.

Within the scope of the project, applications should include support, cooperation, and/or collaboration with the fishing community.

Solicitation Priorities:

Priority #1 - Promotion and Marketing

Projects sought should:

- Increase market demand and value of U.S. fisheries and/or;
- Demonstrate a direct economic benefit to the fishing community and/or;
- Develop or improve regional, national or global public relations and marketing opportunities to increase domestic production and/or demand for domestic products, and/or;
- Include marketing strategies which involve participation of the seafood industry locally, regionally, or nationally, and/or;
- Conduct domestic market research and/or develop value-added products focused on stimulating demand for U.S. fisheries.

Priority #2 - Development, Infrastructure, and Capacity Building

Projects sought should:

- Develop new or underutilized U.S. fisheries; and/or
- Improve the capacity of fishery sectors, including but not limited to indigenous, artisanal, recreational and other sectors to participate in scientific initiatives, cooperative management, fishery management regulatory processes, or developing and/or marketing of new sustainable fishing opportunities; and/or
- Encourage greater or more effective participation by fishing communities in a targeted area of the U.S. fishery supply chain; and/or
- Demonstrate that any proposed new infrastructure or infrastructure improvement is needed and provides a broad benefit for the fishing community (see Section IV, F. Funding Restrictions).

Priority #3 - Science or Technology that Enhances Sustainable U.S. Fisheries

Projects sought should:

- Directly impact a need identified by the fishing community through science and technology based projects to increase harvest or prevent reduction of harvest of seafood, increase recreational fishing opportunities, or create new market opportunities for fishing communities; and/or

- Demonstrate a direct need or benefit as identified by the fishing community, and connect with one or more segments of the U.S. fisheries supply chain.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program is provided under the Saltonstall Kennedy Act, as amended (15 U.S.C. 713c-3).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Grant awards are dependent on the availability of Federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. This NOFO is being released prior to final appropriations due to award process time frames. Final Congressional direction has not been determined. Applicants are not guaranteed any level of funding. Project proposals requesting less than \$25,000 or greater than \$500,000 in federal funding, will not be accepted or reviewed. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to the S-K Program.

Approximately 50% of available funds may be awarded to project proposals addressing Priority #1. Approximately 25% of available funds may be awarded to project proposals addressing Priority #2. Approximately 25% of available funds may be awarded to project proposals addressing Priority #3. Approximately 10% of available funding may be allocated for projects requesting up to \$100,000 in Federal funding.

NMFS will only accept three full proposals from the same entity or individual. If more than three full proposals are submitted from the same entity or applicant NMFS will accept the first three in the order they are received.

B. Project/Award Period

We will award grants or cooperative agreements for a maximum period of two years (24 months), but shorter term project proposals are welcomed.

Applications beyond this 24 month duration will not be considered. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. Project start dates will be no earlier than September 1, 2025 and no later than March 1, 2026. Award obligation will be dependent upon availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, and acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by NOAA. A cooperative agreement will be used if the proposed project involves substantial Federal involvement. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the award recipient for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the recipient and NOAA. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations, between the applicant's Authorized Representative and NOAA/NMFS representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

You are eligible to apply for a grant or a cooperative agreement under the Saltonstall Kennedy Grant Competition if:

1. You are a citizen or national of the United States;
2. You represent an entity that is a corporation, partnership, association, or other non Federal entity, non-profit or otherwise (including Indian tribes), if such entity is a citizen of the United States within the meaning of section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. app. 802); or
3. You are a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia.

We recognize the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate fisheries policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas, so we encourage applications from individuals, government entities, and businesses in U.S. insular areas. We support cultural and gender diversity in our programs and encourage women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications. We are also committed to broadening the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), which include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, in our grant programs. To find out more about MSIs go to <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/doi-minority-serving-institutions-program>.

We encourage applications from members of fishing communities (including the Great Lakes) and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation. We will consider the extent of fishing community involvement when evaluating the potential benefit of funding a proposal.

Eligible Applicants must submit a full proposal that meets the submission requirements listed in this NOFO by the established due date. Eligible Applicants must also have submitted an agency accepted pre-proposal in response to Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2025-26840 in order to submit a full proposal to this NOFO. Full proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated if a pre-proposal was not received on time and ranked. Multiple full proposal submissions from the same entity or applicant are limited to three.

Non-Eligible Applicants:

You are not eligible to submit an application under this program if you are an employee of any Federal agency; a member of the American Fisheries Advisory Committee (AFAC); a Regional Fishery Management Council (Council); or an employee of a Council. However, Council members who are not Federal employees can submit an application to the S-K Grant Competition.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required. Cost sharing is voluntary and will not increase the chances of your project being selected. If you choose to cost-share and if your application is selected for funding, you will be obligated to account for the amount of cost share dollars reflected in the award documents, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. This commitment of matching dollars becomes a binding offer. If project costs are shared, NMFS must provide at least 50 percent of total project costs.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive funding under this competition; however, Federal scientists can serve as uncompensated partners on proposals. Should you wish to partner with a Federal agency, a written agreement detailing this participation must be provided by an agency official authorized to make the commitment. The agreement should describe any planning, scheduling, conducting, and analyzing of proposed project activities or work to be conducted by a Federal employee, and/or resources provided by the partnering agency, e.g. equipment or lab space. Infrastructure (see section IV, F; Funding Restrictions).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

For the full application, the standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., Project Abstract, SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and the CD-511, is available at <https://www.grants.gov>.

NOTE: Project Abstract is a *new form* that MUST be included for your application to be considered complete.

If an applicant has problems with Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support at 1- 800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, a full proposal application package may be received by contacting Jennifer Foss, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/UNH Joint Hydrographic Center, Chase Ocean Engineering Bldg, 24 Colovos Road, Durham, NH 03824, or email: Jennifer.foss@noaa.gov. Any suggestions or questions regarding the solicitation and application process should be submitted to the S-K Program Manager at Jennifer.foss@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

All application materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be no less than single-spaced printed or typed, in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1- inch margins. If these requirements are not followed, the proposal will be withdrawn without consideration.

Neither Federal employees nor AFAC members are allowed to assist in the preparation of full proposals. Additionally, AFAC members, Fishery Management Councils or employees of a Fishery Management Council are restricted from participating on an S-K project as a PI, Co-PI, Project Lead, Collaborator or Partner. Applications that do not follow these eligibility guidelines will not be accepted into the competition. However, they may provide applicants with information on program goals, funding priorities, and full proposal application procedures. Because this is a competitive program, federal employees and AFAC members will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring full proposals.

A complete standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the provisions of this document. Applications that are not complete on the closing date of this announcement will not be reviewed. Your application must contain all required documents and forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the "Authorized Representative" section of the SF-424 Block 21. Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21. An incomplete application or one that does not follow the format requirements will not be considered and will be withdrawn from the competition.

Listed below are the minimum requirements for each application. Please pay close attention to the designated page limits as well as the other minimum requirements outlined. If any of these requirements are not met or if the page limits are exceeded the proposal will not be considered and will be withdrawn from the competition.

Each application must include Federal application forms, including:

(Note: required federal forms do not count against application page limits as long as they are not submitted in the body of the Project Narrative or Supporting Documents; each federal form should be uploaded as a separate, stand-alone file)

Project Abstract Standard Form. **The Project Abstract is a NEW form. Use the same project abstract from the 2 pg summary** (limited to 200 words; see Content Requirements below). This should include the project's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims, and a description of the research designs and methods. Do not include: proprietary or confidential information, or descriptions of past accomplishments.

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Applicants must enter the NOAA assigned pre-proposal number in box 5b in order to show a pre-proposal was submitted.

SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-construction Programs must be completed. Indicate any matching funds, if applicable.

SF-424B, Assurances for Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non-construction application.

CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.

SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

A Project Summary (described below, limit 2 pages).

A Project Narrative (described below, limit 15 pages).

Data Sharing Plan (Clearly identified and included in the Project Narrative or Supporting Documents). [see Section B, 11, Data Sharing Plan].

A Budget Narrative ([Section IV; (B), C] 10 page limit).

Note: Required federal forms and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) for the primary and/or sub do not count against the Budget Narrative 10-page limit.

Each application should (should to mean recommended but not required) also include:

An identified singular priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The primary priority will determine the subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal. If one is not identified, a priority will be identified for you.

NOAA NEPA Questionnaire ([https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants Questionnaire-final.pdf](https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants%20Questionnaire-final.pdf)). If your project is expected to generate NEPA/environmental data, applicants are strongly recommended to submit answers to questions 1-30 in your application. A completed NOAA NEPA Questionnaire should be uploaded as its own file and not included in any other attachment.

Supporting Documentation (limit 10 pages). May include references, letters of collaboration, resumes and/or curriculum vitae, agreements or contracts and permits not included within the Project Narrative (budget contracts and agreements are included in the budget narrative). All supporting documentation should be combined and uploaded as a single document not exceeding ten pages. Supporting documents will not be accepted as separate stand-alone attachments.

NOTE: Letters of support or collaboration are allowable only from individuals or entities with direct involvement in the project and should outline the specifics of the collaborative effort. Letters of support from individuals or entities that do not have direct involvement in the project will not be accepted during the review process.

Content Requirements:

The summary must include:

Applicant Information: Applicant organization and name, title, and contact information of the Project Leader.

Project Information: Project title, location, requested project period (start and end dates), Federal funding requested, and identification of the singular S-K priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal.

Partners: Identification of collaborating partners, organizations, Co-Project Leaders, titles and contact information.

Abstract: A project abstract in plain language (limited to 200 words).

Summary of potential benefits to the fishing community of the project results (limited to 100 words).

Proposed Activities: Should include a clear description of proposed activities. It is critical this section accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

B. Project Narrative (15 page limit)

The Project Narrative comprises the plan for the project. The narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the proposed activities and the proposed benefit to the fishing community. The major part of the narrative should be devoted to a description and justification for the proposed project, including details of the method to be used. It should include a timeline for major activities of the proposed project, and should indicate who will be responsible for which activities. There should be no ambiguity about who will perform particular parts of the project or the time at which these activities will take place. The Project Narrative may not exceed 15 pages. Any tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations that you submit to document the project and the problem/opportunity you seek to address are included in the 15-page limit.

If a data sharing plan, references, letters of collaboration, resumes or other documents, including federal forms (each federal form should be uploaded as a separate, stand-alone file), are submitted within the Project Narrative they will count against the 15 page limit. If the aforementioned options are included in the Supporting Documentation they will count against the 10 page Supporting Documentation limit; the Project Summary and Budget Narrative have their own page limits.

The Project Narrative should closely follow the evaluation criteria outlined in this solicitation (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) to ensure applications receive a consistent review. The narrative should demonstrate your knowledge of, and convey the need for the project, and show how your proposal builds upon any past and current work in the subject area, as well as relevant work in related fields. The narrative should highlight any relationship to fishery management plans, or other fishery-related strategic planning or management documents, and if the project will yield socioeconomic benefits to the fishing community. You should not assume that reviewers already know the relative merits of the project you describe.

In the Project Narrative you must describe your project as follows:

1. Project goals and objectives - Identify the one specific S-K Program priority (described in Section I. B. Program Priorities) to which the proposed project responds. The primary priority will determine the subject matter experts used to evaluate your proposal. Identify the problem/opportunity you intend to address and describe its significance to the fisheries resource and fishing community. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the “what and when,” but should avoid the “how and why”; and attainable within the time, money and human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measurements. If you are applying to continue a project previously funded under the S-K Program, describe in detail your progress to date and explain why you need additional funding. If the proposal is for renewed support, include a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work. We will consider this information in evaluating your current application.

2. Project impacts - Describe the anticipated short- and long-term impacts of the project on U.S. fisheries and fishing communities in terms of increased economic, or other measurable benefits. Identify the benefits that will be achieved as a result of this effort, both to the recipient, the industry and the general public as a whole. Describe how you/your organization (or others) will monitor progress and measure the project's impacts.

3. Evaluation of project - Specify the criteria and procedures that you will use to monitor and evaluate the relative success or failure of a project in achieving its objectives.

4. Need for government financial assistance - Explain why you need NOAA financial assistance for the proposed work, and why other funding sources, if applicable, cannot fund all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding you have or are seeking for the project.

5. Federal, state, and local government activities and permits - It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. You must note whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate “no permits are required”. If permits are required, provide a list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.). List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect, including activities requiring: certification under state Coastal Zone Management Plans; Section 404 or Section 10 permits issued by the Corps of Engineers; exempted fishing permits, letters of authorization or other permits under Federal Fishery Management Plans (FMPs); environmental impact statements to meet the requirements of NEPA; scientific permits under the Endangered Species Act and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act; or Magnuson-Stevens Act Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation if the project may adversely affect areas identified as EFH. Projects cannot conflict with current regulatory restrictions. Describe the relationship between the project and these FMPs or activities, and list names and addresses of persons providing this information. You may obtain information on these activities from the NMFS Regions (see Section VII-Agency Contacts).

6. Statement of Work

a) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, procedures, statistical design, or analytical methods will you undertake? Describe methodologies or technical plans for activities to be conducted under the project. You should provide sufficiently detailed information on the proposed activities and potential environmental effects so that NOAA can analyze the impacts of the project as required under NEPA (see Section VI. B.2). The NEPA questionnaire is a federal form and does not count towards application page limitations and should be uploaded as a separate, stand-alone file.

b) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? Provide information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact, as appropriate.

c) What are the project milestones? Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important immediate and final products, and key project outcomes. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g., not applied for, pending, secured). Describe the timelines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates. Identify the individual(s) responsible for the various specific activities.

7. Project management - Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Describe how the necessary experience, facilities, and administrative resources are in place to successfully meet the responsibilities associated with managing a federal financial assistance award. Proposals should demonstrate the applicant organization's knowledge and experience in delivering the project requested in this application. The Project Leader may or may not be the applicant; however, if the applicant is not the Project Leader, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and Project Leader (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the Project Leader will be responsible for completing the work).

8. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant - Describe how entities other than the applicant will participate in the project, and the nature (sub-award, sub- contract, volunteer, etc.) of their participation.

9. Outreach and Education - How will this project provide a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding the results of the funded proposal? This includes the degree to which the potential users of the results, (i.e. industry or state resource) have been involved in the planning of the activity, will be involved in the execution of the activity and/or are providing funds, and whether there is a plan to disseminate the results to user groups (including Regional Fishery Management Councils/Interstate Fisheries Management Commissions, etc.) and the public. Describe specific outreach goals and activities.

10. How will project results be disseminated? Describe any expected products of the project, such as marketing and promotional materials, a training manual, management plan, brochures, number of people trained, video, technique, or piece of equipment. Detail if/how products will be distributed to potential users (resource managers, researchers, and other interested parties). Funded applicants are required to submit a brief PowerPoint, or similar presentation software, (or PDF of the presentation) presenting the project framework at the start of the project and then a brief PowerPoint presentation, or similar presentation software, (or PDF of the presentation) of the project results both of which may be displayed on the NMFS S-K Program webpage. Applicants may be required to present their project at a NMFS webinar or other meeting or conference venue (Fishery Management Council Meeting, industry show/conference, etc.) during the project period. Expenses (if incurred) will be reimbursed by the S-K Program.

11. Data Sharing Plan

Data Sharing Plan (two-page limit): Provide a data sharing plan that includes descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project, and how it will be shared [note: expectation is that data are made publicly available]; 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 plan will be reviewed as part of the Evaluation Criteria described in Section V. See Section IV, B) Data Sharing Plan for more information.

Note: The Data Sharing Plan is a federal requirement. All proposals must contain a section clearly labeled Data Sharing Plan.

C. Budget Narrative (10 page limit)

Note: Required federal forms and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) for the primary and/or sub do not count against the Budget Narrative 10-page limit. Each application must include clear and concise budget information, both on the required Federal forms and as described here. In order for NOAA to fully evaluate the appropriateness of proposed costs, each application must include a line-item budget table including all Federal and non-Federal costs by object class category (the budget table does not count towards the 10-page limit). Additionally, a Budget Narrative must explain and justify all Federal and non-Federal costs by object class category, as listed on the SF-424A under Section B, Budget Categories. Provide detailed narrative descriptions of all costs, and explain each calculation for all budget categories. If applicable, briefly describe the basis for estimating the value of the cost-sharing derived from in-kind contributions. All proposed costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary to the supported activity. Additional Budget Narrative Guidance may be found at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/frequently-asked-questions>.

The Budget Narrative must include the following:

- a) Personnel costs, including salary and wages, should be clearly delineated. Costs should be shown for all named key personnel, and the narrative should detail the amount of time each person will spend on the project, along with their hourly rate or percent of annual salary to demonstrate the cost basis. Personnel costs for each Project Leader should be commensurate with their stated involvement, which may or may not correspond to their current position. Any unnamed personnel may be identified by their job title, and the associated costs detailed in the same manner as for named key personnel. Funds for graduate students must comply with 2 CFR §200.466 Scholarships and student aid costs, and must be reasonable compensation for the work performed. Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salary and wages; fringe benefit rates should be applied consistently, and should apply equally to both Federal and non-Federal (matching) funds, if applicable. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. All funds must be estimated to the nearest dollar; do not submit budgets containing cents.
- b) Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Projected travel costs should be inclusive of transport costs, lodging costs, and per diem expenses for all travelers, which are to be described in detail in the Budget Narrative. If travel details for a particular trip are unknown, explain the basis for estimating proposed costs. To qualify for support, attendance at meetings or conferences must enhance the Project Leader's capability to perform the statement of work or disseminate its results. Domestic travel is to be justified separately from foreign travel, since the latter may require additional clearances. You must adhere to the provisions of the "Fly America Act".
- c) "Equipment" is non-expendable, tangible personal property with a per unit cost of \$10,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year. Items that do not meet the equipment definition must be included under supplies. List each piece of equipment separately and reference the type/model to be purchased and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals. General use equipment must be used 100% for the proposed project if charged directly to the award; if the equipment will be used for multiple projects, only a portion of the expense that is commensurate with the actual use of the equipment during the project may be requested.
- d) Supplies should be itemized to the level of detail known or may be based on established historical costs. Whenever possible, you should include the quantity/number of units and cost per unit to justify expenses listed in the supplies category.

e) Contractual costs should be itemized separately, according to standard budget categories that appear in the SF-424A. Applicants are encouraged to provide separate budgets for each contract and they must provide budgets for each contract in excess of \$250,000, to determine whether proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable. For contracts that are not yet in place at the time of submitting the proposal, the budget narrative must include an explanation of how contractual costs were estimated and what procurement methods they will use to select contractors. Include the total contractual amount on the Contractual line in the SF424A.

f) Other costs include costs not listed in other SF424A cost categories. Examples, where applicable and allowed under the program, may include: individual consultant costs, local travel, medical and dental (non-personnel), printing and publications, and training costs (tuition and stipends), etc.

g) The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an approved indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect costs agreement with the Federal government must be included with the application. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) for the primary and/or sub do not count against the Budget Narrative 10-page limit.

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

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

D. Supporting Documentation (10 page limit)

This section should include: letters of collaboration received from the relevant partners or communities involved in the project; references, resumes and/or curriculum vitae of the Project Leader(s) and any key partners, consultants and/or subcontractors; agreements, contracts and permits (budget contracts and agreements are included in the budget narrative), and/or other information relevant to the proposal not included within the Project Narrative.

All supporting documentation must be combined and uploaded as a single document not exceeding ten pages. Supporting documents (described above) will not be accepted as separate stand-alone attachments.

Letters of support or collaboration are allowable only from individuals or entities with direct involvement in the project and should outline the specifics of the collaborative effort. Letters of support from individuals or entities that do not have direct involvement in the project will not be accepted during the review process.

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 in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Full Applications must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov> under the competition link named “FY25 Saltonstall-Kennedy Full Proposal Competition”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, November 25, 2024, Eastern Daylight Time. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 10 business days following the closing date will not be accepted.

Eligible Applicants must have submitted an agency accepted pre-proposal by July 23, 2024, in response to Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2025-26840 in order to submit a full proposal to this NOFO.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs". Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC), established as a result of EO 12372. Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs". Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC), established as a result of EO 12372.

F. Funding Restrictions

Projects that mainly involve infrastructure (to include personnel, buildings or equipment) development that are for the primary benefit of the applicant are not eligible for funding under the S-K Program. Such projects will be rejected from the competition with no further review.

The S-K Program will not pay fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit on any award. NOAA funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching contribution.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Registration requirements

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

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

1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

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

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

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

2. eRA Commons

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

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

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for eRA Commons registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your Grants.gov registration. Additional information on the eRA Commons registration process is available here:

<https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>

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

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

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

3. Grants.Gov

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov is inaccessible, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed, inked signatures, with original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on a thumb drive, including scanned signed forms. If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit via Grants.gov, the application package should be provided via thumb drive along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the "Authorized Representative" section of the SF-424 Block 21. Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

Full Applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, a full application package may be submitted to Jennifer Foss, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/UNH Joint Hydrographic Center, Chase Ocean Engineering Bldg, 24 Colovos Road, Durham, NH 03824.

V. Application Review Information

Evaluation Criteria

Full Application Technical Review Evaluation Criteria:

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points (whole numbers only) based on the following five evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive. Score ranges are identified for each evaluation criteria below. Top range scores indicate the application fully addressed the criterion, a score of 0 indicates the criterion was not addressed at all. The summed scores of the five evaluation criteria determine the total score.

Importance to the fishing community, the ability to address a specific need or needs as identified by the fishing community, and connection to the fishing community	Maximum Points: 40
<p>Subcriteria #1: Maximum Points 20 This criterion assesses how well the proposal addresses the needs of the fishing community, and describes its relevance to an S-K Program Priority in Section B. Does the project provide a clear definition of the problem, issue or need to be addressed? Is it clear why it is important to the fishing community that this need is addressed? Are the needs of the fishing community meaningfully addressed by the project? Is it clear how the project fits within the identified S-K Program Priority from Section B?</p> <p>Subcriteria #2: Maximum Points 20 This criterion assesses how well the proposal demonstrates participation and/or collaboration with the fishing community. Was the fishing community involved in developing the proposal? Is the fishing community involved in project implementation?</p>	
Objectives, Approach, Materials, and Methods	Maximum Points: 20
<p>This criterion assesses whether the project goal and objective(s) are clear and whether the approach and proposed activities are appropriate to accomplish those objectives. Are the project goal and objective(s) clearly defined, focused, and realistic? Can the objectives be achieved within the proposed project period? Does the application identify appropriate milestones for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, and are they appropriate? Does the application describe what activities will be carried out to accomplish project objectives? Does the application identify likely obstacles along with appropriate strategies to overcome those obstacles? Is there sufficient description of the project's environmental impact, if necessary? Have permits been applied for or acquired, if necessary? Are the costs for the project clearly defined?</p>	
Anticipated impacts of results	Maximum Points: 15

This criterion evaluates what the potential impact and/or benefit will be to the fishing community. Does the proposal adequately describe the potential quantitative and/or qualitative impacts and/or benefit(s) to be achieved? How is this benefit and/or impact determined and measured? How much of an impact and/or benefit is expected to be achieved by the project? Will the project yield socioeconomic benefits, such as increased business and/or recreational opportunities?

Applicant capacity and qualifications	Maximum Points: 10
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This criterion assesses organizational capacity to effectively manage a federal financial assistance award, and whether the applicant and/or team members possess the necessary expertise and qualifications to effectively implement the project.

Does the applicant demonstrate adequate administrative capability and experience to successfully manage and implement this project? Are the available organizational support, equipment and other physical resources adequate for the proposed project?

Does the applicant and/or team have the necessary relationships and capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work? Does the application detail qualifications and experience of the Project Leaders and/or partners (e.g., include brief resumes)? Does the application demonstrate that fishing community collaborators have the relevant expertise and experience to effectively support the project? In cases where sub-contracts/sub-awards are proposed for carrying out specific tasks, are the quality/appropriateness of the personnel, facilities, and procedures (laboratory methods, work plan and or quality oversight procedures) adequate?

Outreach and education	Maximum Points: 15
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This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and/or outreach strategy.

Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results given the nature of the work?

Depending upon the project, outreach and education may include peer reviewed publications, presentations at professional meetings, brochure development, public meetings, or distribution of project results to appropriate managers or management agencies. Are the various target audiences, such as the fishing community or the general public, identified? Will the outreach methods acknowledge NOAA Fisheries' support of the project? Does the Data Sharing Plan (when applicable) include a description of the types of data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing and security?

Review and Selection Process

Full Proposal Review and Selection

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review will be conducted on each application when they are received. Applications will be screened to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials, ensure a pre-proposal was submitted and accepted by the agency (see Section IV. D. Submission Dates and Times); the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and includes a project summary with an abstract and summary of potential benefits, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV. B. Content and Form of Application.

Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will not be considered and will be withdrawn.

We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above by the submission deadline, the application will not be considered and will be withdrawn.

2. Technical Review - After the initial screening, independent written technical evaluations from three or more appropriate Federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise will be obtained to determine the technical merit of the proposal. Their evaluation will be based solely on the information included in the application, and the criteria described in Section V. A, Evaluation Criteria. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. No consensus advice will be given. These reviewers will be required to certify they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect technical reviewer identity to the maximum extent permitted by law. Following completion of the technical review, the individual technical review scores will be averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order by their final technical scores.

NOTE: All eligible applicants who submitted an agency accepted full proposal to the competition will receive reviewer comments.

A "cutoff" score will be established. Applications that scored below the cutoff will be eliminated from further consideration. Applications above the cutoff score will move to panel in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be forwarded to panel out of rank order (see Section C. Selection Factors).

3. Constituent Panel Review - NMFS may solicit individual comments and evaluations from a panel or panels of three or more representatives selected by NOAA. Panel members will be chosen from the fishing industry, state government, non-government organizations, and others, as appropriate. The panelists' role is to enhance the Agency's understanding of this select group of proposals received under the competition, prior to recommendations for selections being made. Should a Constituent Panel Review(s) be conducted, panelists will be provided with the applications, and for applications to continue a previously funded project, information on progress on the funded work to date.

Each proposal that was moved to the Constituent Panel Review from the Technical Review has been determined as technically sound. At the Constituent Panel Review, each panelist will evaluate in a group setting (meeting or webinar) the relevance and need to the fishing industry and/or community of each proposal. During the Panel meeting, each Panelist will score the proposal in whole numbers (no decimals) between 1 and 10 (poor to excellent) for each application according to the scale in the paragraph below, and provide comments to support their score. Using the scale below panelists will evaluate each proposal using the following criteria:

- the significance of the need (problem or opportunity) being addressed and relevance of the proposal to the fishing community,
- the degree to which the project involves support from, cooperation and/or collaboration with the fishing community,
- the proposed plan to disseminate project results and;
- benefits (fishing community, resource, economic) derived from investment in the project.

0-2 – Poor; application was not responsive to the criteria above

3-4 – Fair; application was marginally responsive to the criteria above.

5-6 – Good; application was adequately responsive to the criteria above

7-8 – Very Good; application was strongly responsive to the criteria above

9-10– Excellent; application was highly responsive to the criteria above

Panel members will be required to certify they do not have a conflict of interest and that they will maintain confidentiality of the panel deliberations. NOAA will protect panelist identity to the maximum extent permitted by law.

During the Panel (in-person or virtually), reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Panelists must individually submit their final score to the S-K Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. No consensus advice will be given by the Panelists on recommendations or scores. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order will be developed based on the average score from the constituent review panel.

4. American Fisheries Advisory Committee (AFAC) Review - All proposals that were reviewed by the Constituent Panel(s) were scored during that Panel review which equates to a qualitative rank using the following scale:

Poor
Fair
Good
Very Good
Excellent

In S-K Competition years where funding allows, all proposals with a rank of Excellent will be recommended for funding. In years where funding limits will allow only a portion of proposals with a rank of Excellent to be funded, AFAC, will review those proposals ranked Excellent, in a group setting, and will make a recommendation for funding based on a final review of the relevance and need of the proposal to the fishing Industry. Committee members will vote “fund” or “do not fund” for each application in the Excellent rank. Final funding recommendations will be for those applications with the greatest number of “fund” votes, up to the amount of funding available.

Should available funds allow additional applications to be funded beyond the Excellent rank, the Committee review process will follow the steps outlined above. The Committee may only vote on the qualitative rank category that can only be partially funded. The committee must fund all applications in fully funded ranks.

5. Funding Recommendations

Technical Review Only - The Competition Manager will use the technical review scores, ranking and review comments to develop a recommendation for project funding.

Constituent Panel Review (if applicable) - The Competition Manager will use the constituent panel score, ranking and review comments to develop a recommendation for project funding.

Not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities, as appropriate. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be required to modify objectives, work plans and budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. Awards are not necessarily made to the highest ranked applications.

Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. geographically
 - b. by type of institution
 - c. by type of partners
 - d. by research priority
 - e. by project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.

4. Program priorities and policy factors.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
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

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by mid-May of 2025. The earliest start date for projects will be September 1, 2025, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

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>

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.

Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials

Buy America Preference. Recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (Department) for a program for infrastructure are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for an infrastructure project 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 that meets or exceeds this standard has been established under applicable law or regulation for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product; and
3. all construction materials are manufactured in the United States – this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The construction materials standards are listed below.

Incorporation into an infrastructure project. 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.

Categorization of articles, materials, and supplies. An article, material, or supply should only be classified into one of the following categories: (i) Iron or steel products; (ii) Manufactured products; (iii) Construction materials; or (iv) Section 70917(c) materials. An article, material, or supply should not be considered to fall into multiple categories. In some cases, an article, material, or supply may not fall under any of the categories listed in this paragraph. The classification of an article, material, or supply as falling into one of the categories listed in this paragraph must be made based on its status at the time it is brought to the work site for incorporation into an infrastructure project. In general, the work site is the location of the infrastructure project at which the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials will be incorporated.

Application of the Buy America Preference by category. An article, material, or supply incorporated into an infrastructure project must meet the Buy America Preference for only the single category in which it is classified.

Determining the cost of components for manufactured products. In determining whether the cost of components for manufactured products is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components, use the following instructions:

1. For components purchased by the manufacturer, the acquisition cost, including transportation costs to the place of incorporation into the manufactured product (whether or not such costs are paid to a domestic firm), and any applicable duty (whether or not a duty-free entry certificate is issued); or
2. For components manufactured by the manufacturer, all costs associated with the manufacture of the component, including transportation costs as described in paragraph (a), plus allocable overhead costs, but excluding profit. Cost of components does not include any costs associated with the manufacture of the manufactured product.

Construction material standards. The Buy America Preference applies to the following construction materials incorporated into infrastructure projects. Each construction material is followed by a standard for the material to be considered “produced in the United States.” Except as specifically provided, only a single standard should be applied to a single construction material.

1. Non-ferrous metals. All manufacturing processes, from initial smelting or melting through final shaping, coating, and assembly, occurred in the United States.
2. Plastic and polymer-based products. All manufacturing processes, from initial combination of constituent plastic or polymer-based inputs, or, where applicable, constituent composite materials, until the item is in its final form, occurred in the United States.
3. Glass. All manufacturing processes, from initial batching and melting of raw materials through annealing, cooling, and cutting, occurred in the United States.
4. Fiber optic cable (including drop cable). All manufacturing processes, from the initial ribboning (if applicable), through buffering, fiber stranding and jacketing, occurred in the United States. All manufacturing processes also include the standards for glass and optical fiber, but not for non-ferrous metals, plastic and polymer-based products, or any others.
5. Optical fiber. All manufacturing processes, from the initial preform fabrication stage through the completion of the draw, occurred in the United States.
6. Lumber. All manufacturing processes, from initial debarking through treatment and planing, occurred in the United States.
7. Drywall. All manufacturing processes, from initial blending of mined or synthetic gypsum plaster and additives through cutting and drying of sandwiched panels, occurred in the United States.
8. Engineered wood. All manufacturing processes from the initial combination of constituent materials until the wood product is in its final form, occurred in the United States.

Waivers

When necessary, recipients may apply for, and the Department may grant, a waiver from these requirements.

To help federal agencies and recipients meet BABA requirements, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network™ provides a service to connect stakeholders, including recipients, to U.S. manufacturers that have relevant production capabilities and capacities to help fulfill current market and supply chain needs. Recipients considering a BABA nonavailability waiver are strongly encouraged to contact the NIST/MEP for assistance with supplier scouting services prior to seeking a BABA nonavailability waiver. Further information on the NIST/MEP supplier scouting services is available at: <https://nist.gov/mep/supply-chain/supplier-scouting>.

When the Department has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the Buy America Preference in any case in which the Department determines that:

1. applying the Buy America Preference would be inconsistent with the public interest (public interest waiver);
2. 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 (nonavailability waiver); or
3. 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 (unreasonable cost waiver).

A request to waive the application of the Buy America Preference must be in writing. The Department 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 on the Department's Build America, Buy America website found at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/build-america-buy-america>

Definitions

"Buy America Preference" means the "domestic content procurement preference" set forth in section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act, which requires the head of each Federal agency to ensure that none of the funds made available for a Federal award for an infrastructure project may be obligated unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials incorporated into the project are produced in the United States.

"Construction materials" means articles, materials, or supplies that consist of only one of the items listed in paragraph (1) of this definition, except as provided in paragraph (2) of this definition. To the extent one of the items listed in paragraph (1) contains as inputs other items listed in paragraph (1), it is nonetheless a construction material.

1. The listed items are:
 1. Non-ferrous metals;
 2. Plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables);
 3. Glass (including optic glass);
 4. Fiber optic cable (including drop cable);
 5. Optical fiber;
 6. Lumber;
 7. Engineered wood; and
 8. Drywall.
2. Minor additions of articles, materials, supplies, or binding agents to a construction material do not change the categorization of the construction material.

"Infrastructure" means public infrastructure projects in the United States, which includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for 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; and structures, facilities, and equipment that generate, transport, and distribute energy including electric vehicle (EV) charging. **“Infrastructure project”** means any activity related to the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States regardless of whether infrastructure is the primary purpose of the project. See also paragraphs (c) and (d) of 2 CFR 184.4.

“Iron or steel products” means articles, materials, or supplies that consist wholly or predominantly of iron or steel or a combination of both.

“Manufactured products” means:

1. Articles, materials, or supplies that have been:
 1. Processed into a specific form and shape; or
 2. Combined with other articles, materials, or supplies to create a product with different properties than the individual articles, materials, or supplies.
2. If an item is classified as an iron or steel product, a construction material, or a Section 70917(c) material under 2 CFR 184.4(e) and the definitions set forth in 2 CFR 184.3, then it is not a manufactured product. However, an article, material, or supply classified as a manufactured product under 2 CFR 184.4(e) and paragraph (1) of this definition may include components that are construction materials, iron or steel products, or Section 70917(c) materials.

“Predominantly of iron or steel or a combination of both” means that the cost of the iron and steel content exceeds 50 percent of the total cost of all its components. The cost of iron and steel is the cost of the iron or steel mill products (such as bar, billet, slab, wire, plate, or sheet), castings, or forgings utilized in the manufacture of the product and a good faith estimate of the cost of iron or steel components.

“Section 70917(c) materials” means cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives. See Section 70917(c) of the Build America, Buy America Act.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DOMESTIC SOURCING REQUIREMENT

Prior to initiation of any construction that may arise in this award, the Recipient is required to inform the NOAA Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer whether it is using iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials as described in the Specific Award Condition in this award on Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction

Materials. In addition, the Recipient is required to inform the NOAA Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer whether those materials are produced or manufactured in the United States, or alternatively, it is requesting one or more waivers, as described in the award condition. The Recipient is required to coordinate with NOAA regarding its compliance with this Term.

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted semiannually and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted semiannually. 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.fsrc.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

All progress reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each six-month period from the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 120 days after the award expiration.

A brief PowerPoint presentation, or similar presentation software (or PDF of the presentation), of the project results is required and should be submitted with the final report. The final report and PowerPoint, or similar presentation software, is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries S-K Program website or other NOAA publication along with the PowerPoint presentation, or similar presentation software, introducing the project, the Project Abstract, Summary of Potential Benefits and the Project Leader, including the Project Leader email contact information.

VII. Agency Contacts

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VIII. Other Information

n/a