

# NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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## Executive Summary

### Federal Agency Name

OAR Ocean Acidification Program (OAP)

### Funding Opportunity Title

FY25 Ocean Acidification Coastal Research: Uniting Investigations and Shipboard Experiments (OA CRUISE)

### Announcement Type

Competitive

### Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-OAR-OAP-2025-28702

### Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.017

### Dates

**Informational webinar 10/25/24:** An informational webinar will be held on October 25, 2025 at 1:00 pm ET. Please register for the webinar here:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8739403744065631317>.

**Full proposals due 11:59 pm ET, 1/31/25:** Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on January 31, 2025. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind the following information necessary to submit an application on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov): (1) a free annual registration process in the electronic [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](https://www.sam.gov) may take between three and five business days or as long as several weeks, as described in Section IV.G. of this Announcement, (2) required institution registration with eRA commons may take up to 4 weeks, and (3) if you submit an application via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), you will receive a series of email notifications for up to two business days before learning via validation or rejection whether NOAA has received your application. If use of [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is not feasible, contact the NOAA OAP Program Manager (see Section VII for contact information) as soon as possible and no later than two weeks before the due date to assess whether alternative arrangements can be made.

## Funding Opportunity Description

NOAA's Ocean Acidification Program (OAP) is soliciting proposals to complement core observing activities on its upcoming East Coast Ocean Acidification Cruise (ECO-A4), which targets U.S. Coastal Large Marine Ecosystems on the North American East Coast from the Scotian Shelf to the port of Miami, extending from shore to beyond the shelf break. The proposed activities should expand the ocean acidification (OA)-focused observational and experimental capabilities of this repeated quadrennial oceanographic research cruise to better achieve the strategic aims of the program. Projects should complement the existing Level 1 capabilities of the ECO-A4 cruise by fulfilling Level 2 and/or Level 3 priorities outlined in the OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance document ([https://bit.ly/OAP\\_NOFO2023](https://bit.ly/OAP_NOFO2023)). Proposals should demonstrate how their proposed efforts, in concert with the planned Level 1 core activities on ECO-A4, would address regionally relevant objectives in the NOAA Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Research Plan: 2020-2029.

Subject to the availability of funding, the OAP anticipates approximately \$350,000 will be available to support approximately 1-3 projects total, with each project funded at \$100,000 - \$250,000 total. This document sets out requirements for submitting to this opportunity. For additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application, please contact the program managers listed in section VII.

This funding opportunity is being released in tandem with a non-grant opportunity to sail on the ECO-A4 cruise. The opportunity, "Non-Grant Access to ECO-A4" will provide awardees with berth space, lab space, and sampling opportunities aboard the ECO-A4 cruise without a monetary award. The application process will require a 2-page description of the project along with logistical information regarding equipment needs, lab space and water needs, berth space requests, and others. Those interested in applying for space on ECO-A4 without receiving funding can contact the program managers listed in section VII.

## Full Text of Announcement

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The NOAA Ocean Acidification Program (OAP) was established by the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring (FOARAM) Act of 2009. Ocean acidification (OA) is the ongoing change in ocean chemistry in response to the ocean's uptake of increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The OAP coordinates OA research, monitoring, and other activities to improve our understanding of how ocean chemistry is changing, what are the primary regional drivers of that change, what impacts these changes are having on marine organisms, and what risk these changes may pose to U.S. marine-dependent communities and economies. As part of its responsibilities, the OAP provides grants for research projects that explore OA effects on marine organisms and ecosystems, and the socioeconomic impacts that can lead to potential adaptive strategies within US waters.

OAP is soliciting proposals for field projects that complement the core activities of the East Coast Ocean Acidification cruise anticipated for summer 2026 (ECO-A4). Projects should specifically address Level 2 and/or Level 3 requirements detailed in the OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance document. Project activities should be coordinated with other cruise activities to achieve long-term monitoring goals of repeated coastal OA cruises, including to:

- Better understand changes in inorganic carbon dynamics due to anthropogenic carbon inputs and natural changes in coastal U.S. Large Marine Ecosystems, and
- Identify and track marine biological metrics attributable to acidification conditions.

Particular emphasis should be placed on metrics that best inform our understanding of changes in the marine biological carbon pump or OA impacts on regionally important fisheries. Research efforts should adhere to the community best-practices to ensure data can be used to determine the patterns and evolution of OA conditions in coastal waters. Please note that the Level 1 requirements are being funded separately from this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

#### Guiding Documents:

In addition to the FOARAM Act and state legislation, several national and regional reports and products can provide background information on OA research and strategies and rationale for this NOFO:

- NOAA Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Research Plan: 2020-2029: [https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ResearchPlan2020-2029\\_comp.pdf](https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ResearchPlan2020-2029_comp.pdf)
- OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance: [https://bit.ly/OAP\\_NOFO2023](https://bit.ly/OAP_NOFO2023)
- Link to OA Cruise information page: <https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/ocean-acidification-research-cruises/>

## **B. Program Priorities**

Projects must achieve Level 2 and/or Level 3 activities as outlined in the OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance document. Additionally, projects must address at least one of the priorities listed below:

- Expand observational and experimental capabilities of repeated OA research cruises to better achieve the strategic aims of the program.
- Address at least one priority research theme in the NOAA Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Research Plan: 2020-2029.

Additionally, projects must fit within the operational and logistical configurations of repeated OA research cruises, which are detailed in the following two paragraphs.

The ECOA-4 cruise will be executed on a NOAA research vessel similar to the NOAA ship Henry B. Bigelow with an at-sea operational endurance of approximately 40 days. The primary operations of this cruise consist of a series of sampling transects extending from nearshore and estuarine waters to beyond the shelf break for intercomparison with GO-SHIP surveys. Along these transects, CTD/Niskin casts are performed at approximately 200 stations to document the core biogeochemical properties at each station. Proposed projects should nest inside this operational configuration but may request special augmentations as necessary (e.g. a limited set of selected stations could be targeted for diel measurements). Ultimately, any selected projects will need to work within the time, lab-space, water budgeting, and ship capability constraints as determined by the OAP field operations manager and cruise lead scientists.

The ECOA-4 cruise is anticipated to be executed between May and September of 2026 for approximately 40 days, running between Nova Scotia, Canada, and Miami, Florida, USA. The exact timing, duration, and direction of the cruise track are subject to change pending vessel availability. The cruise will be led by scientists selected through a separate funding opportunity. It is anticipated that the ship will be equipped with atmospheric and oceanographic instruments, underway carbon sensors, dry and wet labs, deck space for laboratory vans, and winch and A-frame capability. Further information about recent ECOA cruises can be found here: <https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/ocean-acidification-research-cruises/>.

The OAP works to establish a culture of professionalism and respect through violence prevention and response. All cruise participants will be required to undergo Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) training and OAP will provide a dedicated SASH liaison on board each cruise. Please find more about NOAA's Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program here: <https://www.noaa.gov/workplace-violence-prevention-response-program> See section VI.B.12 below for the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy.

### **C. Program Authority**

The Ocean Acidification Program was established by the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring (FOARAM) Act Act 33 U.S.C. 3701-3708.

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. Funding Availability**

Subject to the availability of funding, it is anticipated that approximately \$350,000 will be available to support approximately 1-3 projects total, with each project funded at \$100,000 - \$250,000 total. Each project should not exceed three years in duration.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards, or that any application will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive full funding.

### **B. Project/Award Period**

Applicants may submit proposals for projects up to 3 years in duration that are anticipated to begin September 1, 2025. Each project should include pre-cruise planning, cruise execution, and post-cruise data analysis and archival.

Subsequent funding is contingent on the availability of out-year appropriations and performance under the current award. Pre-award spending may be authorized 90 days prior to the start date of the award with approval from the program manager and the NOAA grants officer.

### **C. Type of Funding Instrument**

Successful proposals will be funded through a cooperative agreement, therefore NOAA will be substantially involved by, for example, coordinating partners and teams to accomplish the work; assisting with technical aspects of the project; and/or coordinating access to Federal operational entities, data or facilities needed to support the work. Funding for contractual arrangements for services or products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this notice.

## **III. Eligibility Information**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

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

If an applicant has a partner(s) who would receive funds, the lead grantee will be expected to use subawards or subcontracts or other appropriate mechanisms to provide funds to the partner(s).

## **B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement**

There is no requirement for cost sharing.

The OAP appreciates that applicants may seek additional support (in-kind or cash) for projects. While a cost share of funding is not required, applicants are requested to provide a description of complementary funding and in-kind contributions from project partners if applicable.

## **C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility**

The OAP Field Operations Manager listed below will evaluate if a project is feasible given the limitations of the cruise vessel (ie: berthing space, water budget, vessel capacity etc.). Only projects deemed feasible will be eligible to be forwarded for review. Please reach out to the Field Operations Manager in advance of submission if you have questions about whether your project will be eligible.

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

# **IV. Application and Submission Information**

## **A. Address to Request Application Package**

This solicitation, complete application packages (including required Federal forms) with instructions and the address for submission can be found at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), or by contacting Liza Wright-Fairbanks ([liza.wright-fairbanks@noaa.gov](mailto:liza.wright-fairbanks@noaa.gov)). If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the agency contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions. Visit the [Resources for Applicants and Grantees](#) section of OAP's website for a [New Application Process Guide](#) created by NOAA Fisheries, partially summarized below.

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

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

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

#### **Submission Checks:**

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

- First check - Grants.gov: Grants.gov will check for an on-time submission and attachments uploaded for each required form in the application package. If your application is successfully submitted in Grants.gov, you will receive a Grants.gov tracking number.

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

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

## B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of the Required Proposal Elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Proposal Elements" below. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance. All required proposal elements should be single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins.

The submitting applicant should redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII that should be redacted from the application includes but is not limited to social security number, date of birth, student identification number (from transcripts) or other information which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

**Required Proposal Elements:** A full proposal application must include the following elements:

1. Project Narrative. The Project Narrative must include the following documents:
  - Project Description: Include all elements below. The total number of pages should not exceed 7. Excess pages will not be included in the review.
    - Cover page (1 page): Include the project title; names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of co-PIs; and a budget overview including the total project cost and annual breakdown of requested funding by partner.
    - Project abstract (250 words): Provide a concise summary of the proposed project.
    - Project background (½ page): Explain the specific problem(s) this project seeks to address and justify its importance as well as its relevance to the level 2 and level 3 activities listed in the [OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance](#).
    - Project objectives (½ page): Provide a list of clearly defined objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity. How will these objectives, in concert with the other cruise data, advance broader regional objectives as detailed in the NOAA Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Acidification Research Plan and better inform our assessment of regional vulnerability to acidification?

- Project details (2 ½ pages): Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives. Provide details on what is required to complete the proposed project, including but not limited to: berth space, ship capabilities, laboratory bench space, dedicated ship maneuvers, small boat operations, freezer space, HAZMAT storage or disposal, A-frame or winch needs, equipment deployment, and/or the amount of water needed from each CTD cast.
- Anticipated milestones and deliverables (1 page): What are the expected milestones and deliverables that will mark the project's progress? Please provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed milestones and deliverables, which spans the entire duration of the project, including the release of deliverables.
- Outreach plan (½ page): Describe how you will be able to engage with or support cruise outreach efforts spearheaded by NOAA OAP. The OAP strives to have dedicated outreach personnel onboard for the duration of the cruise. Please note if you will be able to work with them to achieve cruise outreach goals, including photography, videography, interviews, and project summaries for a public audience. Also note if you have additional outreach opportunities which you would like to pursue as part of this project.
- Diversity statement (½ page): The OAP recognizes that it has a particular and unique opportunity to support NOAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion by taking an intentional step that encourages applicants to consider diversity and inclusion as part of their scientific projects. In this section, describe how the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, geography, etc.) and how these groups are given a voice in the community of practice. Examples could include (but are not limited to) the full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in conducting this work or benefitting from its outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by NSGO related to diversity, equity and inclusion:  
<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visioning/DiversityInclusion>
- Project supplemental materials (all components are required except the letters of support):
  - Works cited (no page limit): All in-text citations should be listed here.
  - Curriculum vitae (CV) for each co-PI: Each person's CV should not be longer than 2 pages. Excess pages will not be included in the review.
  - Current and pending support: Describe any current or pending sources of support for each co-PI.
  - Letters of support: Letters of support are optional and can be included here.
- Required Environmental Compliance materials: Include all of the information referenced in Section VI.B (NEPA) below as well as copies of existing permits. If permits have not yet been secured but are necessary for the proposed work, please provide a clear timeline for securing these permits. The timeline should clearly indicate: 1) relevant permitting authorities, 2) information required to secure a permit, 3) when permit applications will be submitted and 4) how long permitting generally takes (estimate only). Answers to the NOAA NEPA questionnaire are not required for this solicitation.

- Data Management Plan (not to exceed 2 pages): All applications must include a Data Management Plan that is compliant with NOAA’s Public Access to Research Results Plan (<https://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/parr.html>). The Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of metadata and data expected to be created during the course of the project, plans for disseminating the metadata and data to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of the metadata and data. The National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) serves as the data management focal point for the NOAA Ocean Acidification Program (<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/ocean-carbon-acidification-data-system>), and all data resulting from proposals selected for funding must be archived and accessible through NCEI. Post-cruise data reduction, quality control, and coordination/sharing with other cruise participants should be performed within 12 months of cruise execution, with submission to NCEI OCADS no later than 2 years from collection in accordance with NOAA data management standards.

2. Budget Narrative: Applications must include a detailed budget narrative to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year of the proposed project. An applicant requesting funds for indirect costs in its proposal budget that has a current Federally approved rate should submit documentation of the indirect cost rate agreement as an attachment to its application submission. An applicant without a Federally approved rate should refer to Section IV.B. of this Announcement regarding options.

3. Standard forms: In addition to the documents required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov (links found below). These include:

- SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004) This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period, as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution’s accurate EIN and DUNS and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.
- SF-424A Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006): This form, titled “Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs,” should describe the entire funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Each federal and match year should have its own column. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).
- SF-424B Assurances (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007): The form, titled “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs,” should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.
- CD-511 (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce): The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” should be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.
- SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046) if applicable: The form, titled “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” should be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

4. Cruise logistics: Fill in the information requested in the OA Cruise Proposal Logistical Requests spreadsheet: <https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/OA-Cruise-Proposal-Logistical-Requests.xlsx>. If a certain box in the spreadsheet does not apply to the proposed work, fill it in with “n/a”. This document is not included in any page limits.

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

- Follow the instructions found on the Grants.gov website for application submission into the Grants.gov system. All required forms that do not have specific placeholders in the Mandatory Document box must be submitted in the Optional Form box as Other Attachments and labeled with the document name: i.e. budget narrative, project description, milestone chart etc.
- Save your completed application package with two different names before submission to avoid having to re-create the package should you experience submission problems. If you experience submission problems that may result in your application being late, send an email to support@grants.gov and call the Grants.gov help desk. Their phone number is posted on the Grants.gov website. The Program Manager associated with the Notice of Funding Opportunity will use programmatic discretion in accepting applications due to documented electronic submission problems.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Submission Checks:

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

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

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

### D. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposal applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 31, 2025. Applicants should be aware that OAP staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please note that validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission.

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

### E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a) (2), an opportunity for public notice and comment is not required for this notice relating to grants, benefits and contracts. Because this notice is exempt from the notice and comment provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required, and none has been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

### F. Funding Restrictions

See Section III. A. Eligible Applicants for restrictions on the use of funds related to federal agencies, labs, and personnel.

### G. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

## H. Address for Submitting Proposals

## V. Application Review Information

<b>1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 35</b>
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.</p> <p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. This includes the appropriateness of the proposed effort for the associated regional cruise. This also includes how well the effort addresses elements listed in the OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance.</p>	
<b>2. Technical/scientific merit</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 35</b>
<p>This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.</p> <p>This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate and will be piloted/demonstrated prior to the execution of the cruise, and whether there are clear project goals, objectives, and data management considerations.</p>	
<b>3. Overall qualifications of applicants</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 5</b>
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.</p> <p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.</p>	
<b>4. Project costs</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 10</b>
<p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.</p> <p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.</p>	
<b>5. Outreach, Education and Diversity</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 15</b>
<p>This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.</p> <p>This criterion assesses how well the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc) in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).</p>	

### Evaluation Criteria

1. Relevance and applicability to the program goals (35 percent). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. This includes the appropriateness of the proposed effort for the associated regional cruise. This also includes how well the effort addresses elements listed in the OA Cruise Science Priority Guidance.

2. Technical/scientific merit (35 percent). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate and will be piloted/demonstrated prior to the execution of the cruise, and whether there are clear project goals, objectives, and data management considerations.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (5 percent). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
4. Project costs (10 percent). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.
5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (15 percent). This criterion assesses how well the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc) in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

## **Review and Selection Process**

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. 2. Full Proposal Application Requirements or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review at the discretion of the competition manager.

Applications that pass the administrative review will be reviewed by technical experts drawn from disciplines that are relevant to the applications. Each proposal will receive at least three written reviews assessing its merits with regard to the evaluation criteria. A rank order list will be created from the average scores from the written reviews.

The proposals will be reviewed by the program manager to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions. The program manager, NEPA staff lead, or grants specialist may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the environmental effects, or administrative correctness of the application, and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

A final feasibility review by the OAP field operations manager in conjunction with the ECOA-4 cruise leads will occur to confirm that the proposed effort can be achieved within the context of all proposals given merit review scores and project-specific logistical needs including berth space, water budget limitations, and other vessel restrictions. The results of this review will be presented to the selecting official to inform their decision.

## **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. Feasibility of the project within cruise resource limitations (e.g. ship capabilities, berth space, and water budget).
3. Balance/distribution of funds:
  - a. geographically
  - b. by research priority
  - c. by type of institution
  - d. by type of partners
  - e. by project types
4. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies.
5. Program priorities and policy factors.

6. Applicant's prior award performance.
7. Partnerships with/participation of targeted groups.
8. 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

Proposals will be reviewed in the spring of 2025. Applicants will be notified no later than June 2025 for a start date of September 1, 2025.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification when the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA grants officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the authorizing official and the PI of the project either electronically or in hard copy. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected. Anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to all applicants, regardless of whether they were selected to be funded.

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

**RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** For awards designated on the CD-450 as Research, the Commerce Terms, and the Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions (Research Terms) as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently, at

<https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a specific award condition.

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

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

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

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

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

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA).** NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500\\_1508.pdf](http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

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

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

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

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at: [https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data\\_Sharing\\_Directive\\_v3.0\\_remediated.pdf](https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf) and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INDIRECT COST RATE. If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the Modified Total Direct Cost base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, NOAA Grants Management Division, [Jennifer.Jackson@noaa.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Jackson@noaa.gov).

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

## C. Reporting

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

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

NOAA awardees will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports electronically through eRA. Instructions for submitting financial and progress reports will be provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division as part of the award terms and conditions.

Recipients are required to submit progress reports in eRA. Included in the report must be a table report out of milestones and deliverables outlined in the project proposal with associated status, anticipated timeline, and actual timeline/date of accomplishment. The tables columns should include:

- Column 1: "Milestone/Deliverable Name"- This column will list 1 key project milestone or deliverable per row.
- Column 2: "Status"- This column will provide the current status of the associated milestone or deliverable. Status options are Complete, In Progress/On Schedule, In Progress/Delayed, Not Started/On Schedule, Not Started/Delayed, Aborted.
- Column 3: "Original Proposed Target Date"- This column will provide the original planned date of completion for the milestone or deliverable. The date will remain unchanged throughout the course of the project.
- Column 4: "Current Target Date or Date of Completion"- This column will provide the anticipated date of completion if the milestone or deliverable is not yet complete. This may be the same as the date listed in Column 3. If the milestone or deliverable is complete, this column will indicate the date of completion.

An excel template can be found here: [https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/OAP\\_Milestones\\_Deliverables\\_Table\\_Template.xlsx](https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/OAP_Milestones_Deliverables_Table_Template.xlsx)

## VII. Agency Contacts

The Ocean Acidification Program contact is Erica Ombres, Federal Program Officer: [Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov](mailto:Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov).

The technical point of contact for cruise logistical questions or facilities and instrumentation availability is Liza Wright-Fairbanks, Environmental Research and Field Operations Manager: [Liza.Wright-Fairbanks@noaa.gov](mailto:Liza.Wright-Fairbanks@noaa.gov).

## VIII. Other Information

An informational webinar will be held on October 25, 2025 at 1:00 pm ET. Please register for the webinar here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8739403744065631317>.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. If you are unable to attend the webinar it will be recorded and the video will be posted to the OAP website. Potential applicants are encouraged to check OAP's website at <https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov/WhatsNew/Funding.aspx> for FAQs and access to the webinar video.

The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other federal employees, and also by federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.