

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Table of Contents

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY	1
Executive Summary.....	1
Full Text of Announcement.....	2
I. Funding Opportunity Description	2
II. Award Information	5
III. Eligibility Information	6
IV. Application and Submission Information.....	8
V. Application Review Information.....	17
VI. Award Administration Information	20
VII. Agency Contacts.....	27
VIII. Other Information	27

Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

NOS Office for Coastal Management (OCM)

Funding Opportunity Title

FY 2025 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program - Ruth D. Gates: Supporting Hawaii's Sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plans

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NOS-OCM-2025-30196

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.482

Dates

Full applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on June 13, 2025, to be considered for funding.

Funding Opportunity Description

The purpose of this notice is to solicit financial assistance applications that will support state and national management goals through the creation of Sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plans (CR-FMPs) across the Hawaiian Islands. The applicant will work closely with partners at the State of Hawaii's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and NOAA Pacific Island Regional Office (PIRO) to support development of CR-FMPs as part of the State's Holomua Initiative. The State will lead this process, driven by local, island-based Navigator Teams; this award will focus on providing technical support and creating decision-making tools to aid this process, and to support additional science needs to support future management decisions.

These funds will be utilized specifically to support technical writing needs in Lana'i, Hawai'i Island, Kauai, and Oahu CR-FMPs, in coordination with DAR. CR-FMPs will identify specific management actions that will contribute to reaching locally identified sustainable fisheries management targets on each island, as well as developing monitoring and evaluation plans after CR-FMPs are complete. Additional funds will be used to support management driven scientific research that will directly advise the CR-FMPs.

Applications submitted to this funding opportunity should propose work plans over a duration of no more than 36 months (3 years). Each application should not request more than \$400,000 per priority, with a maximum of \$600,000 in Federal funds. Applications are expected to be submitted by entities with a physical presence and long-term partnerships in Hawaii, and applicants should have demonstrated experience working across multiple partner types, such as government, nonprofit, and universities, and with Hawaiian organizations.

Pending Federal appropriations, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) expects approximately \$600,000 to be available for initiating financial assistance awards for two (2) organizations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. As mandated in the Act, recipients are required to match NOAA's Federal contributions with non-Federal matching contributions at a minimum ratio of 1:1, unless the applicant requests and is granted a waiver to the matching requirement by the agency.

All projects must receive evidence of support (e.g., a letter of support or other indication of collaboration) by appropriate representatives of the State in which the project will be conducted. NOAA CRCP encourages applicants to provide evidence of support with their applications, and requires evidence of support to be confirmed prior to final selection. All proposals will be shared with coral reef management representatives from the appropriate jurisdiction(s) during review and their feedback will be considered prior to final selection. Any projects that do not obtain support are unable to be funded.

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

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

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) launched its Holomua Marine Initiative (<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua>) as a way to work with communities to effectively manage nearshore marine resources around the six main Hawaiian Islands so that local resources are available and plentiful, now and for future generations. This is a community-based planning approach to ensure local knowledge is coupled with the best available science to guide marine resource management planning at every step in the process.

One of the goals outlined in the Holomua Marine Initiative is the creation of Sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plans (CR-FMPs) for Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui, the island of Hawaii, and a statewide plan by 2030. The planning process was first launched on Maui as a pilot in October 2022, and a locally driven Navigator Team is currently guiding the development of a sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plan (CR-FMP). Navigator teams serve as the technical body for these plans, and will be composed of a variety of stakeholder groups to ensure island wide buy-in on, and local support for, sustainable fishing recommendations. Navigator Team membership will vary by island but could include: individuals with expertise in Hawaiian practices, members of the fishing community, youth, elders, community leaders, and local environmental groups.

The FY 2025 NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program - Ruth D. Gates: Supporting Hawaii's Sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plans funding opportunity will support the Holomua Marine Initiative via two priority tracks (see I.B. Program Priorities for details). Applicants can apply for one or both:

Priority 1: Technical support and writing to create CR-FMPS and Evaluation criteria.

Priority 2: Science and tools to drive management decisions for the Holomua Marine Initiative Process.

All projects must receive evidence of support (e.g., a letter of support or other indication of collaboration) by appropriate representatives of DAR or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted. This evidence of support should be provided with the application, when possible, but is not required within the package. All proposals will be shared with coral reef management representatives from the appropriate jurisdiction(s) and their feedback will be considered prior to final selection. Any projects that do not obtain support are unable to be funded. Applicants are encouraged to consult with all relevant local governmental and non-governmental entities involved in coral reef activities while developing the application and demonstrate collaboration among these entities.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the CRCP intends to initiate new awards through competitive Notice of Funding Opportunities within the Ruth D. Gates Grant Program:

1. Fishery Management Councils Cooperative Agreements; and
2. Supporting Hawaii's Sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plans.

All the information in this funding opportunity announcement pertains only to the Supporting Hawaii's Sustainable Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plans category. More information about the Fishery Management Councils Cooperative Agreements and other funding opportunities can be found at https://coralreef.noaa.gov/conservation/funding_opps.html as it becomes available.

B. Program Priorities

This funding opportunity seeks to provide funding to support the creation of three CR-FMPs and Evaluations plans across the Hawaiian Islands. Specific outcomes of this funding should include technical support for drafting of three plans for Lana'i, Hawai'i Island, Kauai, or O'ahu CR-FMPs and the support of management driven science to help aid in future decision-making on sustainable fisheries management.

This opportunity will enhance the conservation and restoration of coral reefs by:

1. Addressing conflicts arising from the use of environments near coral reefs or from the use of corals, species associated with coral reefs, and coral products, including supporting consensus-driven and community-based planning and management initiatives for the protection of coral reef ecosystems; and/or
2. Stimulating innovation to advance the ability of the United States to understand, research, or monitor coral reef ecosystems, or to develop management or adaptation options to conserve and restore coral reef ecosystems.

A description of how the project meets one or both of the above criteria is required.

There are two priority tracks and applicants can apply for one or both:

Priority 1: Technical support and writing to create CR-FMPS and Evaluation criteria.

To support the Holomua Marine Initiative and DAR with technical skills to improve Hawaiian communities' ability to make sound decisions on sustainable fisheries management through the creation of CR-FMPs for up to three of the Hawaiian Islands: Lana'i, Hawai'i Island, Kauai and O'ahu. These CR-FMPs must identify specific management actions that will contribute to reaching locally identified sustainable fisheries management targets.

The successful applicant should provide technical support for these efforts by collating relevant nearshore and coral reef fisheries information and conducting the technical writing of sustainable CR-FMPs. The development process will be led and facilitated by DAR staff, but the applicant's technical writer(s) will coordinate with Navigator Team members to ensure common goals. The successful applicant will complete draft plans that the Navigator team, in coordination with DAR, will share with the broader community and use to advise future regulatory changes. The technical writer(s) should expect to travel to five to eight in-person Navigator Team meetings annually.

Additionally, technical support and writing will be provided to support the DAR staff in creating Monitoring and Evaluation Plans for each completed CR-FMP. These plans will aid in tracking success and additional management needs after implementation of recommended management efforts in the completed CR-FMPs.

Successful applications are expected to include the following activities:

- Write, refine and finalize three CR-FMP with input from stakeholders and DAR staff, over three years.
- Complete three Monitoring and Evaluation plans, in cooperation with DAR staff over three years.
- Strong coordination during the duration of the project with DAR and NOAA staff to ensure the project aligns with management goals.

Priority 2: Science to drive management decisions for the Holomua Marine Initiative Process.

As the Holomua Marine Initiative moves forward, additional science needs have been identified that will aid in making sustainable management decisions. These projects should focus on creating high quality scientific programs, with results to directly advise DAR and community based management decisions. High priority needs include:

1. Implement a comprehensive statewide market-sampling program for key reef species in Hawaii, including Uhu and Kala, in close coordination with DAR. Create an incentive-based program to engage the commercial fishing community and markets to assist in data collection (including reproductive data), and to provide samples. Design program to be able to provide data at a statewide and an island specific level, Program should be designed to be robust enough to advise future management decisions on species included.
 - Management goal: Create statewide and island specific database to contribute to comprehensive life history data to support DAR management decisions and the Holomua CR-FMPs.
2. Create and implement a comprehensive program to assess lobster populations to guide future management actions. Program design should include targeted traditional life history data collection (focusing on moon phases, times and seasons when lobsters are most commonly caught) with engagement with the fishing community, including utilizing a social monitoring or citizen science approach. This project should conduct a feasibility study, develop a scope of work, and implement the methodology on one to two of the seven populated islands.
 - Management goal: Create a comprehensive solution to improve data collection on lobster populations in order to advise future management actions to ensure lobster sustainability.

3. Assess the feasibility and implement a stock enhancement of Mullet in Hilo to support a sustainable fish alternative for fishers. Establish genetic sampling of Mullet across the state, to advise future stock enhancements to support sustainable fishing. Create a public awareness campaign to improve understanding of sustainable fish options, including mullet.
 - Management goal: Assess the feasibility of mullet stock enhancements in Hilo and statewide, to drive alternate sustainable food fish options for fishing communities in Hawai'i.

Successful applications are expected to include the following activities: Comprehensive scientific research driven by management questions, with results achievable within the 3 year time frame.

- Strong coordination during the duration of the project with DAR and NOAA staff to ensure the project aligns with management goals.
- Clear plan to communicate results to a variety of audiences, including DAR staff, Holomua Navigator teams and community members.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program - Ruth D. Gates Grants Program is provided by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, 16 U.S.C. 6410.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for this Federal award announcement is approximately \$600,000 and is subject to the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations. This announcement anticipates funding up to two awards, depending on available funding.

Funding for the future years (FY26 and FY27, if applicable) should be estimated in the FY25 application, with final amounts determined in future years, pending future Federal appropriations, progress towards project milestones, and continued relevance to program objectives. Proposals for multi-year funding should outline the costs expected for year two and three, as applicable, in detail in this proposal (see Section IV.B for more details about the budget narrative for multi-year awards).

The lead applicant on any proposal will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of, and in a manner consistent with, this program, including any funds awarded to an eligible sub-awardee.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available 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, the applicant does so at their own risk of not being selected and these costs not being included in a subsequent award. Direct costs of proposal preparation shall not be included within the project application budget. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for project costs if this program fails to receive funding. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

B. Project/Award Period

The start date of proposals shall be on February 1, 2026, or later. Applications should conform to performance periods of up to 36 months (3 years).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for these awards will be a cooperative agreement. In a cooperative agreement, NOAA will have substantial involvement in the project. Applicants may propose anticipated Federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals, or NOAA may establish the particular involvement. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include the collaboration and participation of NOAA Federal Program Officers, Coral Reef Management Liaisons, Coral Reef Fisheries Liaisons, and other NOAA staff in project development, planning and implementation; technical monitoring of award activities beyond ordinary stewardship; and coordination of funded projects with other CRCP-funded efforts as needed. When applicable, substantial involvement will be described in a condition included in a funded award. NOAA will address any negotiations on NOAA staff roles in any project through the substantial involvement award condition.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to apply or receive an award, applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations; SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons. For each, the complete registration process can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants must begin this activity as soon as possible and well before the proposal due date. For more information on how to meet these registration and application submission requirements without errors, we advise all to carefully review relevant Applicant and Grantee Training modules: <https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>. Additionally, we advise that all carefully read 'Additional Application Package Forms' within the 'Full Proposal Required Elements' section below.

This funding competition is open to nongovernmental organizations or research institutions with demonstrated expertise in the conservation or restoration of coral reefs in practice or through significant contributions to the body of existing scientific research on coral reefs (see IV.B.4.b. Appendices), coral reef research centers designated by NOAA CRCP under 16 U.S.C. 6411, and regional fishery management councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.).

Eligible applicant types may include the following, provided they also meet one or more of the requirements outlined above:

- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- For-profit organizations
- Private institutions of higher education
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education

NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications. NOAA CRCP staff are available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities. For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement, but may serve as collaborative project partners. In-kind services from Federal agencies and employees cannot be considered as part of an applicant's match on shared costs. If Federal agencies are collaborators, applicants are expected to provide detail on the planned level of Federal engagement in the application. Examples may include, but are not limited to, partnership services, serving in a review capacity, or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies. Federal funds for any coral conservation award funded under 16 U.S.C. 6410 may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this Grant Program requires a 1:1 contribution of non-Federal matching funds.

“Cost sharing” or matching is defined by 2 CFR 200.1 as “the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute).” NOAA will accept any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions of goods and services, will be accepted as part of an applications cost sharing or matching when they meet all the following criteria listed in 2 CFR 200.306(b):

- Are verifiable in the recipient’s or subrecipient’s records;
- Are not included as contributions for any other Federal award;
- Are necessary and reasonable for achieving the objectives of the Federal award;
- Are allowable under subpart E (Cost Principles);
- Are not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the program’s Federal authorizing statute specifically provides that Federal funds made available for the program can be applied to cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs;
- Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and
- Conform to other applicable provisions of 2 CFR 200.

Matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include third party in-kind goods and services such as private boat use and volunteer labor. Goods and services provided by the recipient have the valuation described in 2 CFR 200.306.

Federal agencies and employees’ in-kind services cannot be considered as part of an applicant’s matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from multiple non-Federal partners in order to meet the 1:1 match requirement, consistent with the standards described in 2 CFR 200.306, and if funds are available within the project period stated in the application.

Applicants must specify the source(s) of match in their proposal and detailed budget narrative and may provide or be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to specific projects, and all other cash or third party in-kind contributions.

If the applicant plans to use any Federal funds as a match, the applicant should identify the Federal statute authorizing the program to use Federal funds to meet the match or cost sharing requirements.

Applicants may choose to designate part or all of their Federally-negotiated indirect costs as match. This may be convenient because the valuation of such costs has already been Federally-approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to the “Indirect Costs” policy in Section IV.B.7 of this announcement.

In addition, any program income that may arise in the project may be applied toward cost sharing or added to the project, consistent with 2 CFR 200.307.

The NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements identified in 16 U.S.C. 6410(b)(3):

1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement with respect to a coral reef project, and
2. The probable benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in the matching requirement.

In the case of a waiver request, the applicant must provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match. Match waiver requests, including the appropriate justification, must be submitted as part of the final application. Please address the waiver request as described in Section IV.B (component 6) of this announcement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard SF-424 application package is available online at <http://www.grants.gov>. If the electronic application is not accessible, applicants may request a paper application package from Craig Reid <craig.a.reid@noaa.gov>.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should submit a complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applications that do not follow the proposal application requirements stated in this announcement may not be considered for review.

All application materials should use a legible 11- or 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. Electronic applications must be submitted as Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) to the extent possible.

Prior to submission, carefully review the PDF Guidelines for submission found here:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm>.

Recent applicants have encountered rejected applications for formatting issues, especially:

- Do not use “bundling” or “portfolio” features to combine PDFs into a single document. Everything must be visible in the PDF.
- Descriptive filenames may only be 50 characters or fewer (including spaces).
- Keep attachment file size to 100 MB or less.
- eRA won’t accept any pages larger than the U.S. standard letter paper size (8.5” x 11”).

We strongly recommend that applicants attempt to submit their full proposals at least a few days prior to the due date in case these or other issues impact your submission, as they are not reasons we can extend the deadline. If you have issues during the submission process, please contact the eRA Service Desk.

The complete application package should include the following documents and forms:

1. A Project Description/Project Narrative (proposal), as described in the application component section below, should be limited to no more than 10 pages, single spaced. The project description should also include a title page and table of contents, but these pages (title and table of contents) will not count towards the page limit. Project descriptions that exceed the 10-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative (see element 2 of the required components section below) before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Pages removed from lengthy applications will not be reviewed or considered. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors may not be understood effectively by reviewers, resulting in lower evaluation scores, so applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration.
2. The following Federal forms from the SF-424 Form Family should be included in the application package, as applicable (no page limit with forms and related mandatory Federal form information). Please note that these Federal forms must be filled out in a Grants.gov Workspace:

1. Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424. Applicants requesting Federal funding under this program must submit a copy of SF-424, 'Application for Federal Assistance'. If the applicant submits a hard copy of the final application, the SF-424 must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative and used as the cover page for the final application. An electronic signature and date stamp will automatically be included on SF-424 forms submitted via Grants.gov.
2. Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A. Applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form to summarize the budget for the proposed scope of work. The first column of Sections A and B shows the Federal funds requested, while the second column of Sections A and B shows the non-Federal matching funds provided for the project. Total award funding is shown in the final column of Section B. Non-Federal funding is broken out by source in Section C. Forecasted cash needs in Section D should be inclusive of all funding for multi-year projects. Federal and non-Federal funds should be expended at a similar rate throughout the course of the project. Section E may be left blank. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Multi-year awards will have out year funds shown in Section E. Please note that completion of the SF-424A form as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF-424A form. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives. Each proposed sub-award of \$50,000 or more should be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed subaward budget.
3. Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
4. Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
5. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

NEPA information, and the Appendices can be uploaded within the application package under "Other Narrative" or "Other Forms".

All applications should contain the following components:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet)
 1. Project title
 2. **Priority(ies) addressed: One and/or Two**
 3. Proposed project period (start date must be the first of the month and end date must be the last day of the month)
 4. Type of project (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement)
 5. Recipient name (must match registered name in sam.gov)
 6. Recipient Unique Entity Identifier number (must match applicant information in sam.gov)
 7. Principal and other investigators (names, organization, and contact information)
 8. Financial representative (names, organization, and contact information)
 9. Requested funding by year, as appropriate (if the project intends to have NOAA retain funds for technical assistance on the project, note the amounts by year and line office using the funds)
 10. Brief project summary
2. Project Description/Project Narrative. All project descriptions (proposals) are limited to 10 pages, single spaced, and must include the following sections:

1. Goal, Objective(s), and Approach. Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved. **Clearly identify whether the proposal addresses Priority One and/or Two.** Goals and objectives must be specific for each year of the work plan presented. Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports in which progress against these goals and objectives will be reported. Provide a work plan that: identifies specific tasks to be accomplished; explains the technical approach (including quality assurance) needed to accomplish the tasks; identifies the roles of partners and collaborators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. Describe how the partners or collaborators are involved in the planning and design process, if at all. Applications should provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of the proposed work to one or both program priorities described in Section I.B of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed scope of work raises any concerns with regard to Federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act.
2. Background. Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem, gap or need, and network to be addressed and the status of ongoing efforts and coordination to address the identified needs or gaps. Summarize the relationship of the proposed work to other regional efforts. Include a description of the qualifications of the individual or entity applying for funds, including demonstrated expertise in the conservation or restoration of coral reefs in practice or through significant contributions to the body of existing scientific research on coral reefs.
3. Partnerships and networks. Identify and describe the professional or technical network that will be leveraged or created locally and/or regionally. Describe how the partners and network users will interact with the project, the communication mechanism utilized to engage the network, and describe how they will use the outcome or results of the project. Describe what existing Federal, state, and local organizations or programs will be connected, integrated, and leveraged. Describe the roles of partners and indicate any efforts or resources that will be leveraged in the project. Letters of collaboration from partners and any letters of support shall be included in the appendices as appropriate. Note that evidence of support for the project is required from appropriate representatives of DAR or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted prior to final selection.
4. Task Outcomes. Identify and describe the anticipated project outcomes. Explain how they will benefit the conservation and restoration of coral reef resources and describe performance measures that will be used to evaluate project success. The narrative should include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also should include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation and restoration, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future.
5. Milestone Schedule. Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.

3. **Budget Narrative and Justification.** In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and justification of costs broken out by individual tasks. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project narrative for the entire award period. Please explain how categorical costs are derived in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to determine if costs are 'allowable and reasonable' according to the cost principles referenced in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. Budget narrative categories should correspond to the standard object class categories listed in Section B of the SF-424A. For additional details, please review the budget guidance provided at:

https://coast.noaa.gov/data/coasthome/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-for-NOAA-grants.pdf.

Applicants should include costs in their proposal to cover expenses to track and measure outcomes, and key metrics of their program. Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known contracts and subawards, and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in the narrative. Applicants should describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each subaward should include form SF- 424A. Detailed budget information includes:

- Name of identified qualified sub recipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or subaward).
- Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
- Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
- Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
- Itemized Budget. Include categories used in the program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.331-200.333 for subawards, and 200.317-200.327 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000. See 2 CFR 200.1 Equipment and 2 CFR 200.313.

Non-Federal applicants should identify if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project.

Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 CFR 200.317-.327. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels. If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for any portion of travel, prior approval is required under the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section G.05.d., and therefore, such travel should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in a bi-annual NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) workshop for recipients.

Refer to item 7 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative.

4. Appendices. Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g. resumes, references, lists of relevant work products or reports, detailed methodologies, data sources, detailed budget narrative, letters of collaboration, letters of support, lists of data sources, and maps) and should not exceed a maximum of 15 pages. Applicants should number the pages in their proposal and any appendices.

As a standard practice, NOAA requires that resumes for Principal Investigators (PIs) of competitive awards be on file and maintained in the grants processing system used by the Department of Commerce, NOAA's electronic grants management system, eRA Commons. Recipients of any award (competitive or non-competitive) are required to designate PIs in NOAA's eRA Commons within 30 days of receiving award offers.

The following appendix documents should be included in the application package:

- Evidence of Support. All evidence of support from partner organizations that are instrumental to the project should be included in the application package. Documents/emails must clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Evidence of support from appropriate representatives of States or other government jurisdictions are required.
- For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.
- NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications. NOAA Office for Coastal Management staff are available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives.
- Statement outlining the organization's demonstrated expertise in the conservation or restoration of coral reefs in practice or through significant contributions to the body of existing scientific research on coral reefs. Please limit your response to a maximum of two pages.
- Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of two pages for each key investigator.
- Data Management Plan. This announcement is seeking proposals that may generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan may be required as part of the proposal.
The Data Management Plan should address the requirements in this section of the Announcement.

- Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the 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 be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.
- 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 contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. There is an optional fillable form for data management and sharing plans that may be requested by email from craig.a.reid@noaa.gov. Otherwise, a typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. The NOAA Program is not offering specific data management technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged. For more information about data sharing in this program, contact the agency official listed in Section VII. of this funding announcement.
- 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.
- 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.
- NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html
- Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.
- More information about the NOAA Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: <https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.all.php>
- Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Craig Reid, Federal Program Officer, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, Craig.A.Reid@noaa.gov.

Additional Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers

Data Accessibility: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NCEI regarding these pending data.

Technical Recommendations: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open- standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Resources: NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB).

5. Permits and Approvals

It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. Applicants must provide a list of all known 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.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. Applicants should include this required element even if permits are not required.

Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA and environmental assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.

For work proposed within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other Federally designated managed areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. For applicants who propose to conduct research or monitoring activities that may affect any coral species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, you will likely need an Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit.

6. Match waiver request (if applicable)

Applicants are required to provide a 1:1 or greater ratio of matching funds to Federal funds in accordance with the provisions of the Act. If the proposal lacks sufficient matching funds, the applicant may include a separate document in which the applicant requests a waiver to the matching funds requirement as described in Section 6410(b)(3) of the Act, as amended. Although the CRCP will consider these requests, in most cases, waivers of the full matching funds requirement will not be provided for applicants to this competition and applicants are advised to provide as much as possible for consideration. Please address all waiver requests to Jennifer Koss, CRCP Director, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, the total amount of matching funds requested to be waived, attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other circumstances preventing the availability of match. For more details see Section III.B.

7. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or "Facilities and Administrative" costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government.

Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 CFR 200.1 and 200.412-415.

A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government should be included with the application package. If an award recipient does not have an established indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimis rate (15% of modified total direct costs) described at 2 CFR 200.414.

Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

Jennifer Jackson, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Jennifer.Jackson@noaa.gov

Applicants are permitted to request indirect costs if their organization has an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency that covers the period of the award. Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package. More information on establishing or negotiating indirect cost rates can be found in Section IV.B.8 of this solicitation.

Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for subawardees; however, indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee. Under 2 CFR 200.414 "Indirect (F&A) Costs," any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 CFR 200.403 "Factors affecting allowability of costs." If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06.

In addition to the standard elements described above, applicants may upload additional supporting documentation by using the 'Optional Form' box under 'Other Attachments' in Grants.gov during the application submission 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.

See Section IV.B., Appendices (above), and VI.B., Administration and National Policy Requirements (below) for additional NEPA information.

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 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.

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

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.grants.gov.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern time on June 13, 2025 (one or the other - hard copy or electronic, but not both).

Applicants should consider the possibility of winter storms and other unforeseen impacts from natural hazards that could affect their internet access and use of grants.gov on or before application due dates. Applicants should be aware that localized hazardous weather or other situations beyond their control affecting their ability to submit packages before deadlines may not result in changes to the application deadline.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications submitted under this competition are subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372.

F. Funding Restrictions

Ineligible projects

- The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or Federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages under Federal or state law; and (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

Cost Principles

- Recipients are subject to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart E "Cost Principles," as well as any DOC regulations that may be in effect at the time of award. Generally, allowable costs include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as the costs are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

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

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (grants.gov) by searching the Notice of Funding Opportunity number or the Federal Assistance Listings number (11.482). Application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the "Apply" function on grants.gov. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use grants.gov, applicants must have a Unique Identity Identifier and be registered in the sam.gov, which requires periodic renewals. Refer to Section IV.C. for details on receiving a unique identity identifier number and registering with sam.gov.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive two email messages from Grants.gov within the next 24 to 48 hours updating them on the progress of their application. The first email provides a tracking number and confirms receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system. The second email indicates that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency.

If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the Federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn. Applicants shall not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files may not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

Craig Reid

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program

Office for Coastal Management

1305 East-West Highway, 10th floor

Silver Spring, MD 20910

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 40
Priority One: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal directly support improving sustainable fisheries management planning in the State of Hawaii? Does the proposal increase DAR's ability to move forward with creating island based Sustainable Fisheries Management plans? 	
Priority Two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does this proposal directly support scientific research that will aid in future management decisions as part of the Holomua process? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does this proposal clearly define coordination between the applicant and the state to ensure the outcomes are aligned with the Holomua Marine Initiative goals and achieve information needed for management decision making? 	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the objectives clearly defined, focused, and realistic? Is the approach appropriate for the stated goals and objectives? Are the project goals and objectives achievable within the proposed time-frame? Does the proposal align with the goals of the Holomua Initiative? 	
3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the applicant, partners, or contractors involved in the project qualified? Do the applicant, partners, or contractors have experience working in Hawaii? Do the applicant, partners or contractors have experience working with Hawaiian communities, or the Holomua Initiative? 	
4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the budget reasonable and commensurate with proposed work? To what extent does the budget include the necessary level of detail and justification? Does the applicant propose unallowable costs or other budgetary items of concern? 	
5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate that the community or leveraged network has been engaged in development of the desired project outcomes? Leverage existing stakeholder group or local organizational knowledge? 	

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on how well the proposal aligns with NOAA CRCP's management priorities, their technical merit, overall qualifications of the funding applicant, project costs, and outreach and education.

Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to assure that it is timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications that meet the minimum requirements will be reviewed by at least three independent peer reviewers with coral reef and/or fisheries management experience during a merit-based review and ranking process. Appropriate mechanisms will be implemented to avoid potential conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. Each reviewer will be asked to individually evaluate and rank proposals using the weighted evaluation criteria above. Proposal evaluations will be based exclusively on information included in the application. Merit reviewer ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

NOAA CRCP will also request and consider written comments on the proposal from each government agency or jurisdiction with management authority over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted.

The Selecting Official, or their designee, may negotiate the funding level or other major aspects of the proposal, and the Selecting Official will make the final recommendation for award to the Grants Officer based on the rank order and selection factors in Section V. C. below to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, may ask applicants to work together or combine projects, may defer applications to the future, or may reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Proposals not initially funded may be considered for funding in another fiscal period, e.g. FY26 without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, specific NOAA cooperative involvement with activities of each project, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA GMD, and Office for Coastal Management officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with NEPA and other legislation.

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.

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants will be notified by approximately October 1, 2025. The anticipated start date for cooperative agreement awards made under this competition is January 1, 2026, dependent on funding availability, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA and environmental compliance analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final selection package has been approved by the NOAA GMD, which is expected to be approximately September 2025. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

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.

Applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant should be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

The official notice of award is the Commerce Form 450 (CD-450), Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, eRA Commons.

Risk Review: After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews. 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 to Responsibility/Qualifications in the System for Award Management at SAM.gov (formerly the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency. NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be made by the NOAA Grants Officer.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain specific award conditions as necessary, such as a limitation on the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements which may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These specific award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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.

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

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at:

https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information:

<https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MATERIALS. If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States—this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials¹ are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

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

DEFINITIONS. “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives² —that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference” means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. “Project” means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. – 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

C. Reporting

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

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

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR 200.328 - .330 and DOC Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, eRA Commons. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request.

A comprehensive final report is due 120 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 120 days of the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's GMD and are up-to-date.

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory to the extent required by the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to the final progress report or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must inventory tangible property at least once every two years and at award closeout. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must submit reports at least annually and at award closeout on the status of real property in which the Federal government retains an interest, unless the Federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients "Submit Additional Closeout Documents" as an award action request in NOAA's electronic grants management system, eRA Commons. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

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 issued. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000. See 2 CFR 170 at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the competition managers: Craig Reid <craig.a.reid@noaa.gov>, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program.

VIII. Other Information

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, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure 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.