

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

OAR Climate Program Office (CPO)

Funding Opportunity Title

Climate Program Office FY2025 Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections (MAPP)
Program: Early Career Award for Exceptional Research in Earth System Model Development
and Application

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-OAR-CPO-2025-27826

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.431

Dates

Letters of intent (LOIs) for all competitions should be received by email by 11:59 p.m.
Eastern Time on September 18, 2024.

Full Applications: Full applications for all competitions must be received by 11:59 p.m.
Eastern Time on December 9, 2024.

Funding Opportunity Description

CPO plays a critical role in advancing science and informing decisions for climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation as part of NOAA and the U.S. Global Change Research Program. CPO research/science programs and activities meet urgent climate challenges, and incubate innovative advancements in Earth system and social sciences; support world-class assessment reports, including the National Climate Assessment; enhance and expand NOAA's capabilities for integrated information systems for drought, heat and floods to deliver timely science-based information that can reduce the impacts and costs of these climate-driven challenges; educate and grow the next generation of experts in support of NOAA's climate mission. Through these new investments, CPO expands previous efforts focused on climate risks to address a suite of urgent climate-driven societal challenges faced by our Nation — including water availability and quality, marine and freshwater ecosystems, coastal changes and inundation, drought and extreme heat and related cascading hazards like wildfire, and air quality, and climate mitigation (more information about CPO Societal Challenges and Risks framework can be found <https://cpo.noaa.gov/climate-risk-areas-initiative/>).

NOAA, OAR, and CPO require applicants and awardees to support the principles of diversity and inclusion when writing their proposals and performing their work; indeed, applicants will be evaluated, in part, on how well principles of diversity and inclusion are addressed. Diversity is defined as a collection of individual attributes that together help organizations achieve objectives. Inclusion is defined as a culture that connects each employee to the organization. Promoting diversity and inclusion improves creativity, productivity, and the vitality of the climate research community in which CPO engages.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Climate variability and change present society with significant economic, health, safety, and security challenges. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has the vision, mission and a set of strategic goals to build a Climate Ready-Nation. The Climate Program Office (CPO) supports this vision as part of the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR). A CPO core function is to support extramural research through a competitive grants process. CPO's programs span foundational, cross-disciplinary climate sciences, assessments, capacity building, tool development, and education. CPO collaborates closely with partners within NOAA and with the broader academic, Federal, Tribal nations, international bodies, and private sector community. CPO works in close partnership with the OAR laboratories and programs to complement and support their in-house research. CPO also works with other parts of NOAA to support their mission areas in weather, oceans, fisheries, and service delivery. CPO further builds networks, coalitions, and collaborations, converges around the best ideas, and provides support to accelerate emerging innovation across the climate enterprise. Undertaking a range of climate science and services initiatives, CPO helps our Nation and the world address climate-related challenges and pursue solution-focused opportunities. CPO's definition of climate services is comprehensive, encompassing not only the development and dissemination of actionable climate science to inform decision making, but also the partnerships to engage in and understand the social and policy contexts within which climate-relevant decisions are made. CPO fulfills NOAA's mandated responsibilities under the National Climate Program Act, the Global Change Research Act and its National Climate Assessment, and the National Integrated Drought Information System Act, and similar international endeavors such as the World Climate Research Program.

CPO's grant programs manage a competitive process through a Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcement to make awards supporting high-quality research conducted across the United States and internationally on the most urgent climate science questions. While each program area has its own focus, together they advance understanding of Earth's climate system through interdisciplinary, integrated scientific research, and leverage the resulting knowledge, data, and systems to enhance society's ability to plan and respond to climate variability and climate change. CPO programs play a critical role in advancing science and informing decisions for climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation as part of NOAA and the U.S. Global Change Research Program. CPO research/science programs and activities meet urgent climate challenges, and incubate innovative advancements in Earth system and social sciences; support world-class assessment reports, including the National Climate Assessment; enhance and expand NOAA's capabilities for integrated information systems for drought, heat and floods to deliver timely science-based information that can reduce the impacts and costs of these climate-driven challenges; educate and grow the next generation of experts in support of NOAA's climate mission.

B. Program Priorities

In FY25, MAPP will be soliciting proposals for Early Career Award for Exceptional Research in Earth System Model Development and Application.

C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 44720(b), 15 U.S.C. 2904, 15 U.S.C. 2931-2934

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

In FY25, approximately It is anticipated that \$300,000 will be available for this competition. Proposals may be for up to \$300,000 per year for approximately 1 new award pending budget appropriations (see section I.B above). Federal funding for FY26 may be used to fund awards submitted under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Current or previous grantees are eligible to apply for a new award that builds on, but does not replicate, activities covered in existing or previous awards. Current grantees should not apply for supplementary funding through this announcement.

B. Project/Award Period

Projects are expected to last up to 4 years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will be a grant. If, however, it is anticipated that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, a cooperative agreement may be awarded. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, applications for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. NOAA will make decisions regarding the use of a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis. Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and state, local and federally recognized tribal governments.

Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice. (See “special instructions for federal applicants” on the CPO website.)

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

All CPO programs do not have any cost sharing or matching criteria.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages can be found on grants.gov. For applicants without Internet access, please contact the CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown by mail to obtain an application package:

Diane Brown

NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1)

SSMC3, Room 12737

1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the competition in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant. Applicants who have not been encouraged may still submit a full application. While LOIs are strongly encouraged, applicants are not required to submit them and may submit a full application even if they have not submitted a LOI.

LOIs should be submitted following the guidance specified in the FY25 Early Career competition Information Sheet. LOIs must be submitted by the deadline specified in Section IV.D below.

The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and a statement regarding its relevance to this competition. **The LOI should be no more than two pages in length and should include the items listed below.** If these items are not included or the LOI is submitted late, the LOI may not be considered:

Identification of the competition that is being targeted in the LOI.

- Competition Name.
- A tentative project title.
- Name(s) and institution(s) of the Lead Principal Investigator(s) and other Principal Investigator(s).
- Statement of the problem.
- Brief summary of work to be completed, methodology to be used, data sets needed or to be collected.
- Approximate cost of the project.

- Timeframe (i.e. 1-3 years depending on Programmatic Requirements)
- Relevance to the Competition that is being targeted.

A response to the LOI from the Competition Manager (e-mail or letter) will be sent to the investigator within four weeks after the LOI due date encouraging or discouraging a full application based on its relevance to the competition. It is then entirely up to the investigator whether to submit a full application.

2. Content and form of Full Application

The following forms and elements are **required in each** application.

Failure to comply with these provisions will result in applications being returned without review.

Full applications are **limited** to:

- 35 pages, single spaced, using 12-point font type with one-inch margins on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper.

The page limit **includes**:

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Project Narrative
4. Associated Figures
5. References
6. Results from prior research
7. Vitaes
8. Current and pending support
9. Data/Information Sharing Plan
10. Statement of Diversity and Inclusion
11. Budget table
12. Budget narrative
13. Statement of leadership in applicant's research area

There should be no co-applicants or subawardees for this competition.

For first time applicants:

- Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)
 - Excerpt 2 CFR 200 Appendix I.D.3: Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) **is required** to: (i) **Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;** (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.
 - In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, an applicant **must register** for a Grants.gov user ID and password.

- **Note that this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly.**
- **To avoid delays, applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching application deadline before registering, logging in, reviewing the application instructions, and applying.**
- Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>.
- INDIRECT COST RATE - If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions.
- The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov.
- Please reference the "Application Checklist" on the CPO website to assist you in submitting your application.

Additional **Required** Materials for all applications (**but excluded from the page limit**):

- Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA)
- Federal Forms: SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511 and other mandated forms
- Letters of support (not included in the page limit)
 - Letters of Support are required, **they will be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposal.**
 - For example, unfunded collaborations should be documented in the body of the Full Proposal (the sections included in page count), and a Letter of Support from the unfunded collaborator could be included as a supplement.
 - In another example, if the proposal includes key stakeholders or users, this should be documented in the Full Proposal, and a supplementary letter of support could be included to convey the value of the project to the stakeholder or user. Please see the competition information sheet for further specific instructions.
- **Additional materials; see below**

Additional **Optional** Materials:

- Associated figures (included in the page limit)

Description of required elements and forms:

(1) Title page: The title page shall identify the Principal Investigator(s) (PI) and institutional representative and clearly indicate which Competition is being addressed by name and Competition number. The lead PI and institutional representative should be identified by: full name, title, organization, telephone number, email, and address. **For paper submissions**, the lead PI and the institutional representative must sign the title page. Please note that the institutional representative will be responsible for signing the grant if the award is successful; ensure that this individual identified will be able to do so in a timely manner.

The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period.

(2) Abstract: A one-page abstract must be included and should contain:

- (a) the project title
- (b) the name of the Competition that is being targeted (and if needed, the type of proposal (i.e., Type A or Type B for CAFA)
- (c) an introduction to the problem

- (d) rationale
- (e) a brief summary of the work to be completed
- (f) a paragraph describing the work's broader impacts and relevance to the Competition that is being targeted as well as NOAA's long-term climate research goals stated in section I.A.

(3) Results from prior research: The results of each prior research project led by the Principal Investigator(s) during the last three years relevant to the proposed effort (not limited to NOAA funding only) should be summarized in brief paragraphs. Because NOAA believes it is important that data sets developed with its support should be shared with the scientific community, PIs should also indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past. **This section should not exceed two pages.** For multiple applications associated with the same project (co-applicants) , this section must be identical in all applications.

(4) Project Narrative: The proposed project must be completely described and include the following elements in narrative form, including:

- (a) Identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology
- (b) Relevance to the Competition to which you are submitting the proposal and to NOAA's long-term climate research goals.
- (c) Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community
- (d) A clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant
- (e) References. Proposals should provide a list of references that were cited in the project narrative.
- (f) Optional but encouraged: figures and other visual materials

The Project Narrative containing these elements (a)-(f) **must not exceed 20 pages of text.**

(5) Vitae: Abbreviated curriculum vitae are requested with each application. Reference lists should be limited to all relevant publications in the last three years with up to five other relevant papers.

(6) Current and pending support: The Principal Investigator must submit a list of all current and pending **Federal** support that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months per year, dollar value, and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support. The list of support will be included in the page limit for the proposals.

(7) Data/Information Sharing Plan: 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 of what the plan should contain and refer to guidance in the competition information sheet.

(8) Statement of Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA): MAPP recognizes that it has an opportunity to support NOAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion by taking an intentional step that encourages program applicants to consider diversity and inclusion as part of their scientific projects. This action has the potential to make an impact on not only the diversity and inclusion in science at NOAA, but also beyond the agency. In this section, applicants should describe how well the proposed activity **broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)** including, but not limited to, **how the project advances the organization or institution's commitment to diversity and advances full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).** If funded activities aligned with diversity and inclusion are being proposed, **please include the description of those within the project narrative and budget justification.** Examples could include ways in which the project will specifically: recruit or retain under-represented groups, collaborate with minority-serving institutions, foster an inclusive and safe environment, share data and/or information in ways that it is accessible to minority-serving institutions. **Applicants are also encouraged to highlight past work in DEIA and the value those experiences will add to the proposal.**

If your institution has a written DEIA statement, you may include that statement, after which also describe how past initiatives to advance DEIA and how aspects of your proposed project exemplify or would expand on DEIA actions and commitments or is highlighted in your institution's statement. Please note that the DEIA statement should not be a personal history, but rather show a track record of your institution's efforts and capacity to engage with DEIA activities and resources.

(9) Budget Table and Narrative:

Budget Table: An itemized budget for all years and a total itemized budget must be included as a separate table that breaks down the budget per object class category. Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging, and ground travel. At this time, the CPO NOFO does not allow course buyouts as a budget expenditure. At this time, the MAPP NOFO does not allow for federal salary as a budget expenditure as part of an application.

Budget Narrative: A brief description of the expenses listed on the budget table and how they address the proposed work must be included. Item justifications must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc. Investigators who will not be requesting funds for salaries must also be listed, indicating their estimated time of commitment. Purchases of equipment greater than \$5000 must include a purchase versus lease justification.

Duplicate work with different federally-funded projects, commonly referred to as "double dipping," is not permitted. As stated in the Code of Federal Regulations, specifically Subpart E- Cost Principles, 2 CFR 200.430 (i)(1)(i-vii), Standards for Documentation of Personnel Expenses, "Charges to Federal awards for salaries and wages must be based on records that accurately reflect the work performed." The regulations additionally state that the work, "Reasonably reflects the total activity for which the employee is compensated by the non-Federal entity, not exceeding 100% of compensated activities."

The budget table and budget narrative should be submitted in a separate file labeled "Budget Narrative"

(10) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: **Each applicant and co-applicant must include a copy of their institution's current NICRA.** The full proposal and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) should be put into one electronic file. To obtain an indirect cost rate if your institution does not already have one, a grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency and negotiate an indirect cost agreement. If an applicant has not previously (ever) established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2C.F.R. 200.414).

Reminder: This document is not a part of the page limit.

(11) Federal Budget Forms: The Federal Budget Forms (SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511) and other mandated forms **are required for all non-federal applicants.**

Budget numbers corresponding with the descriptions contained in the budget narrative and budget table must be included. In addition to including the total budget on the SF424, the application must include the total budget and budgets for years 1, 2, and 3 in separate columns in Section B on page 1 on the SF424A.

(Note that this revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF 424A). All budget items need to **be rounded up** to the nearest dollar to avoid discrepancies.

SF-424B: Assurances – Non-Construction Programs - The SF-424B is required for all applicants that have not updated their System for Award Management (SAM.gov) entity registration since February 2, 2019 to include the Federal financial assistance certifications and representations (certs and reps). If an applicant has updated their SAM.gov entity registration since February 2, 2019 to include the certifications and representations, then the SF-424B is not required.

Reminder: These Federal Forms should be submitted as separate files and are not included in the page count.

(12) The form to request the use of NOAA's high-performance computing platforms is considered part of the full proposal, but it will not be included in the page count. Furthermore, transition plans will not be counted toward the page count, but should not exceed one page in length. See link to the form in the MAPP information sheets.

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.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire: This program does not require any NEPA questions to be answered as part of the application.

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.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire: This program does not require any NEPA questions to be answered as part of the application.

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

Excerpt 2 CFR 200 Appendix I.D.3: Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, an applicant **must register** for a Grants.gov user ID and password. **Note that *this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks* if all steps are not completed correctly. To avoid delays, applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching application deadline before registering, logging in, reviewing the application instructions, and applying.** Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>.

Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their Grants.gov password and SAM database (which now incorporates CCR) registration up-to-date or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov. Note that your CCR username will not work in SAM. You must create a new SAM user account to renew or update your registration. Registration on SAM is a requirement. To obtain additional information and to verify that all required registrations [are current, please visit https://sam.gov/content/status-tracker](https://sam.gov/content/status-tracker).

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

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

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

- Complete the required registration
- Ensure that a registered Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) submits the application
- Read an email message with guidance from Grants.gov

Please note that NOAA has transitioned their grants management system from Grants Online to eRA Commons. This change requires updates to an organization's application submission process. Please reference the eRA Application Process guide on the NOFO announcement page of the CPO website to ensure the successful submission of your application.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of intent (LOIs) for all competitions should be received by email by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on September 18, 2024.

Full Applications: Full applications for all competitions must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 9, 2024.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

Fees and profits are not permitted.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

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

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

All applications should be submitted through grants.gov. If an applicant does not have Internet access, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown should be contacted by mail at: NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12737, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for hard copy submission instructions.

Faxed or emailed copies of applications will not be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 5
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. (Stage 1 Weight=0%) (Stage 2 Weight=100%) (Final Weight=25%) For the CPO grant program competitions in this NOFO, this includes importance and relevance to the program objective in Section I.A, scientific program priorities of the selected Competition(s) in Section I.B, , the PI's record of making his/her data accessible and usable by the scientific community in the past, and the present Data/Information Sharing Plan described in Section IV.B(5) will also be considered when evaluating the importance and relevance of the application.</p>	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 5
<p>This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. (Stage 1 Weight=70%) (Stage 2 Weight=0%) (Final Weight=52.5%)</p>	
3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 5
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. (Stage 1 Weight=20%) (Stage 2 Weight=0%) (Final Weight=15%) This criterion also assess the merits of the Statement of Diversity and Inclusion described in Section IV.B(8).</p>	
4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 5
<p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. (Stage 1 Weight = 10%) (Stage 2 Weight = 0%) (Final Weight =7.5%)</p>	
5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 0
<p>This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.</p>	

Evaluation Criteria

Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received, an administrative review will first be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. The selection reviews will then take place in two stages. In Stage 1, independent peer mail reviewers and/or independent peer panel reviewers consisting of both Federal and/or non-Federal experts will evaluate applications using the three criteria described above: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs. Relevance will be assessed separately in Stage 2. The panel will not give consensus advice. We protect the identities of reviewers to the extent permitted by law.

During Stage 1, each reviewer will provide one score for each of three criteria: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs for each application. The scores from the reviewers for each application will be combined using the weighting averages to produce a single numerical score for Stage 1. Occasionally a reviewer may, due to lack of familiarity in a particular area, choose not to score a particular application. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

If only a mail peer review is conducted for stage 1, proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

If a mail review and a panel review are both conducted for Stage 1, the mail reviews will be provided to the Stage 1 review panel for use in its deliberations prior to providing its ratings, but the Competition Manager will use only the numerical rank order of the peer review panel to determine the average score for each proposal. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

In Stage 2, scores for Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals will be determined by a second panel composed of either Federal or a combination of Federal and non-Federal partners. The applications and their associated scores from Stage 1 will be provided to the Stage 2 panel. Each panel reviewer will provide a relevance score for each application that moved forward from Stage 1. The Stage 2 panel will not give consensus advice.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 weighting of scores for the individual criteria are shown in the following table:

Criterion	Stage 1 Weight	Stage 2 Weight	Final Weight
Importance and Relevance/Applicability	0%	100%	25%
Technical/Scientific Merit	70%	0%	52.5%
Overall Qualifications of Applicants	20%	0%	15%
Project Costs	10%	0%	7.5%
Final Score			
Stage Total	100%	100%	100%

To determine the final score, the scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be combined, with a weighting of 75% for the Stage 1 score and 25% for the Stage 2 score, leading to the overall weightings for each criterion shown in the table above. The final score for each application will be used to determine the numerical rank order of proposals within each Competition.

The Competition Manager will recommend applications to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order unless a recommendation out of rank order is justified based upon any of the factors listed in the following section. Should applications receive a tie score, and funding is not available for every tied application, the Competition Manager may preferentially recommend applications for funding also according to any of the factors listed in the following section. The Competition Manager will review the amounts requested for each selected application (including costs for computing and networking services) and recommend the total duration and the amount of funding, which may be less than the application and budget requested.

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 makes final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications will occur during the 6-7 months following the full applications due date. CPO anticipates that funding decisions on applications will be made during Spring 2025. Such decisions are contingent upon the final FY25 appropriation for NOAA by Congress and the final allocation of funds to CPO by NOAA. Funding for successful applicants is expected to begin during summer 2025 for most approved projects. Applications should use September 1, 2025, as the start date unless otherwise directed by the Competition Manager.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

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

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

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

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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 <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-202-735d-2-scientific-integrity>. 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.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, OTHER FORMS of HARASSMENT or SEXUAL ASSAULT

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

The Climate Program Office (CPO) will not tolerate sexual harassment, other forms of harassment or sexual assault within the agency, at awardee organizations, or anywhere CPO-funded science and education are conducted. As a primary funding agency of fundamental and applied science research in the United States, CPO is committed to promoting safe, productive research and education environments for current and future scientists and engineers. CPO considers the PI and any co-PIs identified on a CPO award to be in positions of trust.

The PIs and all award personnel must comport themselves in a responsible and accountable manner during the performance of award activities whether at the grantee organization, on-line, or conducted outside the organization, such as at field sites, or facilities, or during conferences and workshops.

The many U.S. institutions of higher education and other organizations that receive CPO funds are responsible for fully investigating complaints and for compliance with federal non-discrimination laws, regulations and executive orders. In support of this position, CPO has taken steps to bolster our commitment to a safe research environment, including development and implementation of an award term and condition that requires CPO to be notified: 1) of any findings/determinations regarding the PI(s) that demonstrate a violation of awardee codes of conduct, policies, regulations or statutes relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault; or 2) if the awardee places, or has placed, the PI(s) on administrative leave or imposes, or has imposed, an administrative action relating to a finding or investigation of a violation of awardee policies, codes of conduct, statutes or regulations relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault.

CPO expects all research organizations to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment-free workplaces wherever science is conducted. A community effort is essential to eliminate sexual and other forms of harassment in science and to build a scientific workspace where people can learn, grow and thrive.

C. Reporting

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

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

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the CPO website for further information at www.cpo.noaa.gov. For general NOFO questions, please contact Kathleen Palermo by email at Kathleen.Palermo@noaa.gov or contact the CPO Grants Manager, Diane Brown, by email at diane.brown@noaa.gov. For competition specific information, please contact the corresponding competition manager, as listed in the Information Sheet for that competition. Please allow up to two weeks after receipt for a response.

VIII. Other Information

None.

