

NOAA National Sea Grant College Program 2018 Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes National
Aquaculture Initiative

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: NOAA National Sea Grant College Program 2018 Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes National Aquaculture Initiative

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2018-2005489

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Applicants must submit a proposal to a Sea Grant program by 5:00 p.m. local time on March 2, 2018. Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to their Sea Grant Program one to two months prior to the Sea Grant program application deadline to receive guidance regarding proposal development and discuss their proposed project(s).

Sea Grant programs must submit applications to Grants.gov no later than 5:00 pm Eastern Time on March 30, 2018. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted by the National Sea Grant Office.

Funding Opportunity Description: Depending on appropriations, NOAA National Sea Grant College Program (NOAA Sea Grant) expects to have available a total of \$7,000,000 to \$11,500,000 across fiscal years 2018, 2019 and 2020 as part of the Sea Grant National Aquaculture Initiative (NAI). As part of the NAI, this competition is designed to foster the expansion of a sustainable U.S. ocean, coastal and Great Lakes aquaculture sector by addressing one or more of the following priorities: (a) supporting the development of emerging systems or technologies that will advance aquaculture in the U.S., including projects that will help stimulate aquaculture production by nascent industries; (b) developing and implementing actionable methods of communicating accurate, science based messages and information about the benefits and risks of U.S. marine aquaculture to the public; and (c) increasing the resiliency of aquaculture systems to natural hazards and changing conditions. Successful applications must describe projects that clearly address major constraints, barriers or hurdles limiting aquaculture production in the U.S.

The overall objectives of the Sea Grant NAI are to: 1) address the needs of the U.S. ocean, coastal and Great Lakes aquaculture sector by supporting research, technology transfer, and best

practices related to the sustainable aquaculture of ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes fish, shellfish, or algae species (including state- and federally-managed species), 2) increase production of such species in federal waters and the coastal zone of state waters (as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act to include the Great Lakes), and 3) address major constraints, barriers, or hurdles of domestic aquaculture development that currently limit increased production (this can include research, extension, technology transfer, regulatory/policy and/or legal activities to support production, market access, distribution, etc.).

Sea Grant encourages proposals that: 1) utilize a team approach that fully integrates at least one Sea Grant program and at least one end-user or public-private partnership in the effort, 2) involve Sea Grant Extension personnel and include a technology transfer component, where appropriate, 3) address how project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships, and 4) discuss how, upon completion, the work will have a high likelihood of increasing aquaculture production or address how the work will stimulate or advance nascent aquaculture industry(ies). Proposals should meet the program objectives to the extent practicable.

This Federal Funding Opportunity includes the information needed and the criteria for applications requesting up to \$750,000 in total federal funding for a one- to three-year period. Non-federal matching funds of at least a running total of 50% is required for each year of requested funding (e.g., Year 1 = \$250,000 requested would require \$125,000 match; Year 2 = \$250,000 requested would require \$125,000 match; Year 3 = \$250,000 requested would require \$125,000 match). Please note that, per law, grant applications from Guam Sea Grant waive the first \$200,000 of federal matching requirements; thus no match is required for Federal shares up to \$400,000. Match would then be required for balances above \$400,000 (e.g., \$800,000 requested would require Guam Sea Grant project to provide \$200,000 in match).

NOAA anticipates funding projects ranging from lesser amounts up to the maximum amount (\$750,000) to ensure a diversity of priorities are addressed with the available funding. Awards are anticipated to start on September 1, 2018. Additional applications from this competition may be selected for funding in subsequent fiscal years based on future appropriated funds.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objectives of the Sea Grant National Aquaculture Initiative (NAI) are to: 1) address the needs of the U.S. ocean, coastal and Great Lakes aquaculture sector by supporting research, technology transfer, and best practices related to the sustainable aquaculture of ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes fish, shellfish, or algae species (including state- and federally-managed species), 2) increase production of such species in federal waters and the coastal zone of state waters (as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act – to include the Great Lakes), and, 3) address major constraints, barriers, or hurdles of domestic aquaculture development that currently limit increased production (this can include research, extension, technology transfer, regulatory/policy and/or legal activities to support production, market access, distribution, etc.).

Sea Grant encourages proposals that: 1) utilize a team approach that fully integrates at least one Sea Grant program, and at least one end-user or public-private partnership in the effort, 2) involve Sea Grant Extension personnel and include a technology transfer component, where appropriate 3) address how project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships, and 4) discuss how, upon completion, the work will have a high likelihood of increasing aquaculture production or address how the work will stimulate or advance nascent aquaculture industry(ies). Proposals should meet the program objectives to the extent practicable.

B. Program Priorities

It is a Sea Grant priority to fund projects that meet the NAI program objectives described in section I.A (depending on the number and quality of applications received) to the extent practicable. To meet the program objectives, NOAA Sea Grant seeks applications that clearly meet at least one of the following program priorities. Program priorities have been developed in response to feedback from Sea Grant programs, industry and other stakeholders and are meant to complement priorities from other federal aquaculture opportunities (e.g., Saltonstall-Kennedy, Small Business Innovation Research, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture).

NAI Program priorities include:

1. Developing emerging systems or technologies that will advance aquaculture in the U.S., including projects that will help stimulate aquaculture production by nascent industries.

Projects could include examining innovative ways to increase marine finfish, algae, and shellfish aquaculture in coastal waters, or to develop offshore culture methods or recirculating systems for marine algae or finfish.

2. Developing and implementing actionable methods of communicating accurate, science based messages and information about the benefits and risks of U.S. marine aquaculture to the public. Projects could include engaging coastal communities, fishermen, and other users of the marine environment in better identifying, categorizing and summarizing the range and quality of aquaculture information being disseminated to the public. Projects should be regionally focused and include feedback and evaluation on the effectiveness of messaging or outreach efforts.

3. Increasing the resiliency of aquaculture systems to natural hazards and changing conditions. Projects could focus on issues of concern such as harmful algal blooms, storm events, flooding, pollution, and warming and acidifying coasts and oceans.

It is a program priority to fund projects from each of these priority areas that score highly in both importance/relevance (evaluation criterion 1), technical merit (evaluation criterion 2), and other ranking criteria (depending on the number and quality of applications received), and not just those that receive the highest overall evaluation score.

It is a program priority to fund projects across all ocean, coastal and Great Lakes areas of the U.S.

It is a program priority to fund projects at a range of different federal funding requests. Depending on the number and quality of applications received, NOAA Sea Grant anticipates funding projects ranging from lesser amounts up to the maximum amount (\$750,000) to ensure a diversity of priorities are addressed with the available funding.

It is NOT a program priority to fund projects focused on catfish or any project that involves culturing invasive species.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq., NOAA Sea Grant is authorized to issue these grants.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Depending on the availability of funds, NOAA Sea Grant expects to have a total of

\$7,000,000 to \$11,500,000 across fiscal years 2018, 2019 and 2020 to fund this initiative. Each application can request a maximum of \$750,000 in total federal funds. Therefore in fiscal year 2018, depending on funding available and the number, quality, and requested funding amounts of applications, the number of projects awarded will vary. Additional selections in fiscal years 2019 and 2020 may occur, pending the availability of funds.

Applications requesting any amount up to the maximum federal request are welcome. Applications requesting more than the maximum federal request will not be reviewed.

B. Project/Award Period

The earliest start date for projects will be September 1, 2018, dependent upon availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including National Environmental Policy Act analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. Project end dates should be no later than September 30, 2021.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through grants or cooperative agreements to the appropriate Sea Grant program. Cooperative agreements will be used if the proposed project includes substantial NOAA involvement as described in the award. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken. More information and examples of substantial involvement can be found in the 2016 Department of Commerce Grants Manual, section C.2. (pages 5-32), available at http://www.osc.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Grants%20Manual%20-%202024%20October%202016.pdf.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible and encouraged to participate in this funding opportunity, in conjunction with a Sea Grant program: any individual; any public or private corporation, partnership, or other association or entity (including any Sea Grant College, Sea Grant Institute or other institution); or any State, political subdivision of a State, Tribal government or agency or officer thereof. Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on

applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use, nor can the value of such assets be used as match.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Non-federal matching funds of at least 50% are required for each and every year of requested funding (e.g., Year 1 = a \$500,000 request would require at least \$250,000 in match for year 1; matching funding cannot be below 50% in any year).

Please note that, per law, grant applications from Guam Sea Grant waive the first \$200,000 of federal matching requirements; thus no match is required for Federal shares up to \$400,000. Match would then be required for balances above \$400,000 (e.g., \$800,000 requested would require Guam Sea Grant project to provide \$200,000 in match).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Sea Grant Program Directors will serve as the administrative leads in the submission of applications, therefore, Sea Grant Directors are not eligible to compete for funds under this opportunity. Sea Grant Directors will be considered to be the Principal Investigator for all awards made and must be listed as such in Grants.gov. Sea Grant staff are eligible to compete for funds under this opportunity.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

All applications must be submitted by a Sea Grant program (a Sea Grant College or Institution, Coherent Area Program, or the Sea Grant Law Center). Deadlines for submission can be found in Section IV.D of this announcement. Since internal application processes are different at each Sea Grant program, prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their Sea Grant Program one to two months prior to the state application deadline to receive guidance regarding proposal development, discuss their proposed project(s), and explore opportunities to connect with Sea Grant aquaculture extension experts.

With the exception of parts 3 (a) and (b) of Section IV.B, Application Format and Content Requirements, applications submitted to an eligible Sea Grant program by the applicant must be submitted to Grants.gov unchanged. All complete applications that meet the requirements outlined in Section IV.B. Application Format and Content Requirements that are submitted by the state deadline must be considered by the state Sea Grant program.

Contact information for all eligible Sea Grant programs can be found at <http://seagrant.noaa.gov/About> or may also be obtained by contacting the Agency Contact listed in Section VII.

An application package can be obtained from Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>), addressing opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2018-2005489.

An optional Title Page template, the required Sea Grant Aquaculture 90-2 project summary short form (OMB Control Nos 0648-0538 and 0648-0362) and the required Sea Grant 90-4 budget summary form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362) are available at <http://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Forms-and-Templates> or may be requested from the Agency Contact listed in section VII.

B. Content and Form of Application

Format Requirements: All application materials must be submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF) or a common word processing format, and when printed should meet all format requirements. All pages must be single- or double-spaced; printed or typed in at least 12-point font; and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins. Applications that exceed page limitations will not be accepted. Any appendices or other additional items that are not explicitly allowed will not be evaluated.

Content Minimum requirements:

The following information is mandatory for each application.

1. **90-2 Project Summary Short Form:** It is critical that the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project. Applicants must use the 90-2 Project Summary Short Form for this purpose, found at <http://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Forms-and-Templates>.

The project summary must include:

- (a) **Title:** Exactly as it appears in the rest of the application.
- (b) **Investigators:** List of the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project, starting with the Principal Investigator (Sea Grant Director), followed by the Co-PI (project manager).
- (c) **Federal funding request and proposed matching funds.**

(d) Project start and end date: start date should be September 1, 2018 and the end date should be no later than September 30, 2021.

(e) 300-word maximum Project Abstract, written into the Objectives section of the 90-2 form. This abstract should briefly summarize the rationale for the project, how the priority is being addressed, the scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work and expected accomplishments.

(f) A brief summary (one or two sentences) from the Data Management Plan (further described in Section IV B. 7.) If the project will not generate any environmental data, include a sentence to that effect. If the proposal's Data Management Plan is short enough, you may repeat it in its entirety here. If not, you must indicate that a full data management plan is attached to the proposal, and provide a point of contact (name, phone number, email) for questions about the data.

2. Project description (20 page maximum):

(a) Introduction/background/justification: the applicant must include in this section the current state of knowledge of major constraints, barriers, or hurdles limiting aquaculture production in the U.S. that the proposed project will address.

(b) Work Plans: Include objectives to be achieved, questions to be addressed / hypotheses to be tested; how the objectives relate to the program objective, project objectives, and program priorities; methods; experimental design and statistical analyses (if needed); role of all project personnel (if the project calls for the use of outside consultants who have not yet been selected, the selection criteria must be included here); and all required permits and other authorizations necessary to conduct the work and information on the length of time to acquire such permits or authorizations (if applicable).

(c) Milestone Chart: Include at least one milestone (a significant activity to be performed or objective to be achieved) per year of requested funding. Provide timeline(s) of major tasks covering the duration of the project and a clear description of how each task will be measured and reported.

(d) Outcome: Describe the desired end state (e.g., specific changes adopted by the aquaculture industry) and how the results of the project will benefit end-users (e.g., industry, consumers, state, tribal and federal governments, regional management councils, coastal communities and interstate aquaculture fisheries commissions). Specifically, describe the planned project outcomes in objective, quantifiable terms and how the outcomes will foster

the expansion of a sustainable U.S. ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture sector by addressing one or more of the three program priorities.

Describe the scale of the project outcome and how it will apply to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships. Describe how the outcomes of the project will be measured and reported.

As appropriate and feasible, this section should include an objective measure(s) of U.S. aquaculture production that will be increased by the proposed work, and provide a baseline value for this measure.

(e) Partnerships and related work: Describe any public-private partnerships the project will create or build upon, including how the project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships. Describe any coordination with other agency programs, ongoing effort, other funded or pending proposals, or any other outside activities that are essential to the success of this application. This includes description of the coordination with various elements within and between participating Sea Grant programs and with other partners (e.g., industry; state, tribal, and federal governments; regional management councils; coastal communities; and interstate aquaculture or fisheries commissions).

(f) References and literature citations: Must be included, as appropriate.

3. Budget narrative:

a) Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification Narratives

Compilation of all of the individual Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and budget justifications for each individual project, as outlined in Section IV.B.2., combined into a single PDF document. This single PDF document is attached to the "Budget Narrative Attachments" section of the Grants.gov Application.

b) SF-424A Form, Extra Section B, Attached as a PDF to the "Budget Narrative Attachments" section of the Grants.gov Application.

4. Current and/or pending support: Provide information on all current and pending federal and state (including Sea Grant) support for aquaculture projects and proposals that relate to the proposed work, including subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time from the Co-PI and other senior personnel must be included.

5. Curriculum Vitae (2 pages maximum) per personnel listed on project.

6. Standard application forms: Standard application forms (i.e. SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511) are available through Grants.gov. These are mandatory for an application to be considered complete.

The SF424 forms must match all funding listed on the Sea Grant 90-2 and 90-4 forms.

7. Data Management Plan (2 pages maximum):

See section VI.B. part 8 of this FFO for information on the Data Management Plan.

8. AQUACULTURE FORM: Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for Aquaculture (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)

A separate questionnaire must be filled out for each major action or research task proposed in the application. Every application should have, at a minimum, one abbreviated questionnaire submitted with the application package. Please complete this form in detail. If a response is N/A please explain why that question does not apply to the proposed research activity. The questionnaire can be found here:

<http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/SeaGrantFormsandTemplates.aspx>.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=2dae4a7dcd5848a6364bb94d2d7786dd&mc=tue&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2subtitleA.tpl>.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants must submit a proposal to a Sea Grant program by 5:00 pm local time on March 2, 2018. Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to their Sea Grant Program one to two months prior to the Sea Grant program application deadline to receive guidance regarding proposal development and discuss their proposed project(s).

Sea Grant programs must submit applications to Grants.gov no later than 5:00 pm Eastern Time on March 30, 2018. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted by

the National Sea Grant Office.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

Federal funding received under this Federal Funding Opportunity is prohibited by 33 USC 1124(d)(2) from being used for the purchase or rental of any land or the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel, except for: (1) the short term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings in direct support of this project; (2) purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures approved by NOAA, and (3) rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of this project and approved by NOAA.

Sea Grant Directors are prohibited from receiving any project funds for their own salary.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Selected applications from Sea Grant Program must be submitted electronically to Grants.gov by the application deadline.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance, relevance and applicability of proposed project to the National Sea Grant College Program objectives and priorities (maximum 30 points): Does the proposed project hold intrinsic value or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities?

For this competition, criteria also include how well each proposal met the Project Objectives described in Section I.A and Program Priorities listed in Section I.B.

2. Technical/scientific/merit (maximum 30 points): Is the approach technically sound and/or innovative, are the methods appropriate, and are there clear project goals and objective? The evaluation will focus on the following:

(a) The quality of the work plan to increase aquaculture production and/or how the work will

stimulate or advance nascent aquaculture industry(ies).

(b) If the proposal includes all components necessary to achieve the program objective(s) and clearly identifies an effective plan for integrating all components of the application and an objective way to determine success.

(c) If the work described is achievable during the project timeframe.

(d) If the applicants demonstrate an understanding of all of the required permits and other authorizations necessary to conduct the work and information on the length of time to acquire such permits or authorizations (when applicable).

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (maximum 10 points): Does the applicant and others on the team possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and resources to accomplish the project? The Application will be evaluated based on the applicant's record of achievement with previous funding, as well as the qualifications of project partners. If the proposal includes the use of outside consultants not yet identified, this criterion includes how clearly the selection factors for the outside consultants are set out, and the expected qualifications of the consultants based on those selection factors.

4. Project costs (maximum 10 points): Is the budget realistic and commensurate with the project needs, size and time-frame?

5. Outreach, education and tech transfer (maximum 20 points): 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. Does the project provide a focused and effective education and outreach strategy?

The evaluation will focus on the following:

(a) If the proposal includes a clear and objective work plan for specific activities to maximize use of the integrated team approach.

(b) The level of active participation by the team and partners on the project.

(c) The ability of the project impacts to be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships.

B. Review and Selection Process

All complete and timely applications will be subject to a relevancy and technical review based on the evaluation criteria. Reviewers can include subject matter experts, scientists and managers with backgrounds in government, academic, NGO and/or private sector. Reviewers will not make a consensus decision, but will provide individual scores based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.A.

The Federal Competition Manager will then review the scores and comments and make recommendations to the Federal Selecting Official. Awards will be made in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank based upon one or more of the selection factors described in the next section.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless justification warrants selecting proposals out of rank based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. geographically
 - b. by type of institutions
 - 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.

Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to approval of the award. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures. A summary statement of the review will be provided to each applicant of a proposal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be made by September 1, 2018. Additional awards may be funded from fiscal year 2019 or later appropriations, and these awards will not start until after those appropriations become available. This may result in applicants being asked to modify their start dates.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. 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>.

2. 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 apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

3. **DOC TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.

4. **LIMITATION OF LIABILITY.** Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

5. **UNPAID OR DELINQUENT TAX LIABILITY.** Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns. In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

6. **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.

7. 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. 200.205. 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 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.

8. 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.

9. **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: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

10. **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.

11. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)** - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Reporting

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 sub awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All

awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions and information regarding the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program 2018 Marine, Coastal and Great Lakes National Aquaculture Initiative, please e-mail oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov; Mailing Address: Attention: Aquaculture, NOAA Sea Grant; 1315 East-West Highway, SSMC3, R/SG; Silver Spring, MD 20910.

VIII. Other Information

None