

# NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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## Executive Summary

### **Federal Agency Name**

Fisheries Protected Resources Program Office (PRPO)

### **Funding Opportunity Title**

John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant

### **Announcement Type**

Competitive

### **Funding Opportunity Number**

NOAA-NMFS-PRPO-2025-27629

### **Assistance Listing Number(s)**

11.439

### **Dates**

\*\*Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 30, 2024. U.S. Postal mail and commercial delivery must be documented with a receipt.\*\*

\*\*For technical assistance contact [Grants.gov support \(support@grants.gov\)](mailto:support@grants.gov) 24 hours a day 7 days a week excluding federal holidays. 1-800-518-4726 (U.S); 1-606-545-5035 (International).\*\*

\*\*All applicants must submit a Prescott Letter of Eligibility from their [Regional Stranding Coordinator](#), or the [Prescott Grant Program Manager \(arthur.wong@noaa.gov\)](mailto:arthur.wong@noaa.gov). See “Eligibility” section for more details.\*\*\*Please read this announcement in its entirety, since this Notice has been reformatted and the application requirements have changed from the previous year. Support materials are available on the Prescott Grant Program website in the “For Applicants” section\*\*

NOTE: Please see the [NOAA Grant Application Process website](#) for eRA Commons related registration and submission information. We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov).

Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on registration requirements. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

## **Funding Opportunity Description**

NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) [Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program](#) (MMHSRP) is mandated under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to facilitate collecting and disseminating reference data on stranded marine mammals (cetaceans and pinnipeds, excluding walrus) and the health trends of marine mammal populations in the wild. The [John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program](#) is administered by NMFS to provide federal assistance to eligible members of the [U.S. National Marine Mammal Stranding Network](#), the [U.S. National Entanglement Response Network](#), and their collaborators to provide for: (A) the recovery, care, or treatment of sick, injured, or entangled marine mammals; (B) responses to marine mammal stranding events that require emergency assistance; (C) the collection of data and samples from living or dead stranded marine mammals for scientific research or assessments regarding marine mammal health; (D) facility operating costs that are directly related to activities described in (A), (B), or (C); and (E) development of stranding network capacity, including training for emergency response, where facilities do not exist or are sparse. This document describes how to submit proposals for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2025 and how NMFS will determine which proposals are selected for funding.

## **Full Text of Announcement**

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

#### **A. Program Objective**

The [John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program](#), hereafter referred to as the Prescott Grant Program, was established under the Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 1421f-1), an amendment to the MMPA. The Prescott Grant Program was amended by the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, P. L. 117-263, Div. J, Title CIV. This law includes additional requirements for data collection from stranded animals, as well as the creation by NMFS of a centralized database (HealthMAP) to store the additional data and visualize it for the public. This database is currently in development with the help of the [U.S. National Marine Mammal Stranding Network](#) participants and collaborators.

The Prescott Grant Program is administered by the NOAA NMFS' MMHSRP, and provides federal assistance to eligible U.S. Marine Mammal Stranding Network participants and collaborators, primarily for projects involving marine mammal strandings. The Prescott Grant Program also provides federal assistance to eligible [U.S. National Marine Mammal Entanglement Response Network](#) participants to respond to entangled marine mammals.

In general, the Prescott Grant Program supports: (A) the recovery, care, or treatment of sick, injured, or entangled marine mammals; (B) responses to marine mammal stranding events that require emergency assistance; (C) the collection of data and samples from living or dead stranded marine mammals for scientific research or assessments regarding marine mammal health; (D) facility operating costs that are directly related to activities described in (A), (B), or (C); and (E) development of stranding network capacity, including training for emergency response, where facilities do not exist or are sparse.

A stranded marine mammal is defined as a marine mammal in the wild that is:

- Dead and on a beach, shore, or in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States.
- Alive and on a beach or shore of the United States and unable to return to the water, or able to return to the water, but in apparent need of medical attention.
- Alive in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States but is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power or without assistance.

Entanglements can be external or internal, or both depending on the entanglement configuration.

- An external entanglement is where foreign material (e.g., hooks, line, net, debris, etc.) becomes wrapped around, hooked into, or involves the outside of the body of the animal.
- An internal entanglement is where an animal ingests fishing gear including hooks, line, or other marine debris, which could become embedded in the mouth or throat.

The MMHSRP, through close coordination with Regional Stranding and Entanglement Response Networks, has the following goals, which are listed here in no particular order:

- 1) Improve the rescue, care, and treatment of stranded or entangled marine mammals.
- 2) Reduce the health risk to animals, humans, and the ocean environment during the response to, and rehabilitation and release of, stranded or entangled marine mammals.
- 3) Collect life history, biological, and biomedical data from living and dead stranded or entangled marine mammals.

- 4) Develop baseline reference data on the health of wild marine mammal populations, normal stranding, and entanglement rates, and causes of morbidity and mortality.
- 5) Improve the rapid detection of and response to morbidity and mortality events.
- 6) Collect samples for archival and retrospective studies on causes of mortality or illness, including material samples such as entangled or ingested gear, and biological samples, for archival placement in the [National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank](#) and other properly curated, professionally accredited facilities.
- 7) Refine and/or utilize comprehensive and consistent guidance for the rescue and rehabilitation of stranded or entangled marine mammals, collection of specimens, quality assurance, analysis of tissue samples.
- 8) Broaden participation of historically underrepresented groups (including, but not limited to, age, race, national, cultural, and socio-economic background, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and physical ability) in marine mammal conservation and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by actively encouraging, promoting, and supporting diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in the marine mammal health and stranding and entanglement response community.

The Regional Stranding and Entanglement Response Networks are managed according to the following five regions:

- [Alaska Region](#)
- [Greater Atlantic Region](#)
- [Pacific Islands Region](#)
- [Southeast Region](#)
- [West Coast Region](#)

A national map showing each region's territory, and network members is provided on the [Report a Stranded or Injured Marine Animal website](#).

## B. Program Priorities

These program priorities pertain only to cetaceans and pinnipeds (excluding walrus), the marine mammal species under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce (DOC). When suitable, collaborative multi-organization, multi-regional or cross-regional proposals that amplify the benefits to the networks are encouraged. **All proposals must meet or exceed [NMFS MMHSRP Best Practices on proposed subject matters](#).** International travel to conferences, workshops, and meetings is not eligible to be funded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

There are six program priorities for this grant competition:

- **Priority #1. Stranding Operations & Data Collection/Analysis**

- **Priority #2. Entanglement Response & Reduction**
- **Priority #3. Conferences, Workshops, & Specialized Trainings**
- **Priority #4. Outreach & Education**
- **Priority #5. Diagnostic Labs & Other National or Multi-Regional Services**
- **Priority #6. Research & Development**

The following are descriptions for each priority with their respective National and Regional Goals:

**Priority #1. Stranding Operations & Data Collection/Analysis**

Support basic and enhancement needs of organizations for the response, treatment, rehabilitation, data collection, and data analysis/synthesis from living and dead stranded or entangled marine mammals. Proposals should enhance the quality, consistency, quantity, reporting, and sharing of data collected from stranded and entangled marine mammals. See [Level A Data Collection for Marine Mammal Stranding Events](#) and [Examiners Guide](#) for more information about data. This is a high priority for [NOAA Fisheries' Endangered Species in the Spotlight](#), including:

- Cook Inlet beluga whales, Alaska Region
- Southern Resident killer whales, West Coast Region
- North Atlantic right whales, Greater Atlantic and Southeast Regions
- Rice’s whales, Southeast Region

As well as other endangered marine mammal species, and those species involved in ongoing Unusual Mortality Event (UME) and post-UME monitoring and analyses.

Projects involving non-Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed or non-MMPA depleted species should provide data/information for conservation management needs such as establishing or maintaining baseline information; or identifying human interactions, fisheries interactions, habitat threats, or other threats to co-occurring species.

**Below are tables with nine Priority #1 National Goals from “A” to “I” (in no particular order).**

There may be additional specific goals within some regions (AKR = Alaska Region; PIR = Pacific Islands Region; WCR = West Coast Region; GAR = Greater Atlantic Region; SER = Southeast Region), which are under the broad National Priority and Goal. You may apply for either the National Goal and/or your region’s goal.

<b>Priority #1A: Capacity &amp; Infrastructure</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Build capacity and infrastructure for stranding response for both live and dead stranded marine mammals.
<b>AKR</b>	Build capacity or maintain stranding response coverage for Level A data collection, sample collection and necropsy. Improve live animal response, transportation and rehabilitation.
<b>PIR</b>	Develop and enhance live and dead stranded cetacean response in Guam, American Samoa, and/or the Commonwealth of the Marianas Islands.

<b>WCR</b>	Increase coverage for dead pinniped response and Level A data collection in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Luis Obispo Counties.
<b>GAR</b>	Increase coverage for live and dead large whale response and Level A data collection from Rockport to North Weymouth, Massachusetts.
<b>SER</b>	Increase coverage for live and dead strandings and Level A data collection, especially in Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, South Carolina, southwest Texas, areas where there are episodic stranding, entanglement or mortality events, and areas where stranding/human interaction data are utilized by a Take Reduction Team.

<b>Priority #1B: Necropsies &amp; Diagnostics</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Increase the ability to conduct necropsies and improve detection of illness or injury.
<b>PIR</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>AKR</b>	Collaborative proposal to develop necropsy team leaders for increased large whale necropsy capacity, and the ability to identify signs of human interaction.
<b>WCR</b>	Develop a plan to enhance large whale response and necropsies, provide funds for carcass disposal costs, and network travel in your geographic response area.
<b>GAR</b>	Collaborative proposal to develop necropsy team leaders for increased large whale necropsy capacity, and the ability to identify signs of human interaction.
<b>SER</b>	Enhance capabilities to rapidly perform thorough necropsies on dead-stranded marine mammals in good condition before carcass degradation - particularly during large whale stranding events, mass strandings, human interaction events (e.g., potential gunshot or entangled animals), and episodic stranding, entanglement or mortality events. Enhance capabilities to perform diagnostic tests on dead-stranded marine mammals. This may include analyzing previously collected tissue samples that are currently archived.

<b>Priority #1C: Disease Surveillance</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Conduct surveillance of emerging diseases (e.g., avian influenza, morbillivirus, brucella, protozoa, etc.).
<b>PIR WCR GAR SER</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>AKR</b>	Support collection, shipment, and analysis of samples from live and dead stranded marine mammals for emerging concerns including harmful algal bloom toxins and disease agents.

<b>Priority #1D: Capacity &amp; Coordination</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Improve capacity and coordination (e.g., with local, Tribal, and state government organizations) to more effectively respond to stranding events.
<b>AKR</b>	Covered under National Goal.

PIR	Increase participation of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in cetacean and Hawaiian monk seal response in the Pacific Islands region.
WCR	Develop plans with federal agencies, local/state agencies, Tribal governments, and the local community to support large whale necropsies by: providing landing/necropsy sites; securing towing/transporting services; obtaining heavy equipment for carcass handling and disposal.
GAR	Developing cooperative plans with federal agencies, local/state agencies, Tribal governments to identify carcass landing/necropsy sites.
SER	Enhance logistical support for response to mass strandings and large whales, by: developing cooperative plans with federal agencies, local/state agencies, Tribal governments to identify carcass landing/necropsy sites; or providing support for the stranding network by identifying, securing and/or reimbursing network costs for towing/transport, heavy equipment, and disposal services.

<b>Priority #1E: Event Response</b>	
NATIONAL	Improve ability to respond to events such as: mass strandings, oil spills, natural disasters, out-of-habitat situations.
AKR PIR WCR	Covered under National Goal.
GAR	Increase capacity and improve techniques for out-of-habitat small cetacean responses, including purchase of response supplies, tags or other supplies for post-release monitoring (such as satellite or radio tags), or collaboration with network partners to ensure response readiness.
SER	Enhance capabilities to monitor cetaceans reported in freshwater and rapidly perform thorough necropsies on dead-stranded animals with reported freshwater exposure.

<b>Priority #1F: Preparedness</b>	
NATIONAL	Improve stranding response preparedness, which may include: developing regional equipment caches, increasing or enhancing response gear, medical supplies, and planning to improve veterinary participation (e.g., health assessment, supportive care, and euthanasia).
AKR	Covered under National goal.
PIR	Increase access to field diagnostic equipment and instruments (e.g., mobile x-ray) for more rapid medical assessments for live or dead stranded cetaceans and pinnipeds in the field.
WCR	Expand capacity for humane euthanasia of stranded large whales. Develop methods for assisting apparently healthy, stranded large whales back into the ocean, and tagging them onshore for post-release monitoring. Prepare for live and dead Southern Resident Killer Whale stranding response. This would include maintaining a ready to mobilize trailer with live and dead stranding response supplies, purchasing new poles for a killer whale stretcher, securing a large pool that can be quickly assembled for temporary care of a juvenile Southern Resident Killer Whale, along with a transport box (which may

	require additional fundraising) for short-term care. Resources will ideally be staged in Washington state.
<b>GAR</b>	Support for additional network members to obtain the skills necessary to provide low residue large whale euthanasia by shadowing experienced responders or veterinarians; obtain or refresh the supplies necessary to complete low residue euthanasia.
<b>SER</b>	<p>Collaborative proposals to enhance response and partnerships among stranding networks for mass strandings are encouraged.</p> <p>Enhance capabilities to rapidly and effectively respond to mass strandings. This may include equipment caches, herding capabilities, triage, euthanasia, thorough necropsy, carcass disposal, and resources for potential release (immediate release or post rehabilitation).</p> <p>Improve live large whale stranding response.</p> <p>Enhance capabilities to triage live stranded marine mammals, including performing thorough diagnostics, such as hematology, histopathology and cytology, and/or by providing euthanasia/euthanasia drugs.</p> <p>Establish capabilities to perform diagnostics on live or dead-stranded marine mammals.</p> <p>Establish permanent and/or mobile necropsy facilities.</p>

<b>Priority #1G: Rehabilitation Facilities</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Developing, upgrading or modifying temporary and permanent rehabilitation facilities to meet or exceed the <a href="#">NMFS Standards for Rehabilitation Facilities</a> .
<b>AKR PIR WCR GAR SER</b>	All regions covered under National Goal.

<b>Priority #1H: Rehabilitation and post-release monitoring</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Provide rehabilitation care for live-stranded animals, and conduct monitoring post-release.
<b>AKR WCR SER</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>PIR</b>	Improve access to rehabilitation care of live-stranded cetaceans.
<b>GAR</b>	<p>Provide pinniped rehabilitation for human interaction cases.</p> <p>Evaluate success of short term holding and treatments of pinnipeds (including ice seals) or small cetaceans, including supplies for post release monitoring, and analysis of treatments provided, to optimize success where long term rehabilitation is limited.</p>

<b>Priority #1I: Data entry and analysis</b>
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<b>NATIONAL</b>	Entering stranding data into regional and national databases (e.g., National Stranding Database or HealthMAP, once operational) and/or conducting data analysis.
<b>AKR PIR</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>WCR</b>	Contribute to the new database that stores standardized data for tagging and marking resight data of rehabilitated pinnipeds throughout the West Coast Region. We encourage all West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network participants to provide data to NOAA for the West Coast Region Tag Database and to the Flipper Tags Database overseen by the California Wildlife Center to support this effort.
<b>GAR</b>	Review long term data trends of pinniped rehabilitation cases and synthesize data through analysis such as identifying best practices or admission criteria, to optimize success given limited resources.
<b>SER</b>	Enhance capabilities to synthesize and publish existing stranding data, especially health, cause of illness, and cause of death data.

**Priority #2. Entanglement Response & Reduction**

Enhance entanglement response, training, tagging, and post-release monitoring. Proposals may also work to better understand and address underlying causes of entanglement to reduce injury and mortality due to fishery gear and marine debris interactions.

Below are tables with three Priority #2 National Goals from “A” to “C” ( in no particular order). There may be additional specific goals within some regions (AKR = Alaska Region; PIR = Pacific Islands Region; WCR = West Coast Region; GAR = Greater Atlantic Region; SER = Southeast Region), which are under the broad National Priority and Goal. You may apply for either the National Goal and/or your region’s goal.

<b>Priority #2A: Large Whale Entanglement Response</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Large whales (Large Whale Entanglement Response Best Practices). Enhance regional and trans-regional logistical support, data collection, and analyses for response to living and dead large whale stranding or entanglement events, which may include: Responding to confirmed large whale entanglement reports as requested by the NOAA Regional or National Entanglement Coordinator. This may include vessel and fuel costs, salary for higher level responders, monitoring and survey costs in areas of high whale density, and purchase of response tools and safety gear. Developing and testing novel tools for more efficient responses to entanglements.
<b>PIR SER</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>AKR</b>	In collaboration with NMFS, maintain and enhance large whale entanglement response, documentation, tagging, and post-release monitoring in Alaska by authorized entanglement responders. This may also include vessel and fuel costs, salary for Level 3 or 4 responders; and preparing for entanglement response by purchasing equipment, providing large whale entanglement response training, enhancing communication and outreach, or otherwise building capacity for safe large whale entanglement response.

WCR	Respond to confirmed large whale entanglement reports as requested by the NOAA Entanglement Coordinator. This application may include vessel and fuel costs, salary for Level 3 or 4 responders, monitoring and survey costs in areas of high whale density, and purchase of response tools and safety gear.
GAR	Develop regional identification guide for common sources of entanglement, similar to <a href="#">Guide for Identifying Gear from Marine Mammal Entanglements in the U.S. West Coast and Alaska</a> . Collaboration with partners in SER is encouraged for consistency.

Priority #2B: Small Cetacean Entanglement Response	
NATIONAL	Small cetaceans (Small Cetacean Entanglement Response Best Practices). Enhance regional and trans-regional logistical support, data collection, and analyses for response to live small cetacean entanglement events, which may include: Developing and testing novel tools for more efficient responses to entanglements, such as the development and caching of remote entanglement response tools. Developing remote sedation tools and techniques for small cetaceans. Supporting costs of entanglement responses (including telemetry, tool purchases, etc.) as appropriate .
AKR PIR WCR	Covered under National Goal.
GAR	Develop regional identification guide for common sources of entanglement, similar to <a href="#">Guide for Identifying Gear from Marine Mammal Entanglements in the U.S. West Coast and Alaska</a> . Collaboration with partners in SER is encouraged for consistency.
SER	Provide support for disentanglement of free-swimming small cetaceans. This may include development of tools and methods for boat-based disentanglement, monitoring and capture resources, and capture technique training.

Priority #2C: Pinniped Entanglement Response	
NATIONAL	Pinnipeds (Pinniped Entanglement Response Best Practices). Enhance regional and trans-regional logistical support, data collection, and analyses for response to live pinniped entanglement events by: Improvement in remote sedation tools and capture and handling techniques. Enhance regional and trans-regional logistical support, data collection, and analyses for response to live pinniped entanglement events, particularly in: Alaska; Greater Atlantic; and West Coast regions. Enhance reporting and documentation of live entangled pinnipeds throughout your geographic response area using consistent and comparable methods with other regions.
PIR SER	Covered under National Goal.
AKR	Provide support for disentanglement and post-release monitoring of free-swimming pinnipeds. This may include capture resources and tools and methods for land and boat-based disentanglement, or preparing for entanglement

	response by purchasing equipment, providing first responder training, enhancing communication, or otherwise building capacity for pinniped entanglement response.
WCR	Enhance reporting and documentation of live entangled pinnipeds throughout your geographic response area. Data collected must be provided to NOAA as requested.
GAR	Enhance reporting, documentation, and response to live entangled pinnipeds, which may include training or shadowing opportunities, or purchasing gear caches. Develop regional identification guide for common sources of entanglement, similar to <a href="#">Guide for Identifying Gear from Marine Mammal Entanglements in the U.S. West Coast and Alaska</a> . Collaboration with partners in SER is encouraged for consistency.

**Priority #3. Conferences, Workshops, & Specialized Trainings**

Improve Stranding and Entanglement Response Networks by hosting conferences, workshops, and specialized trainings.

**Below are tables with three Priority #3 National Goals from “A” to “C” ( in no particular order).** There may be additional specific goals within some regions (AKR = Alaska Region; PIR = Pacific Islands Region; WCR = West Coast Region; GAR = Greater Atlantic Region; SER = Southeast Region), which are under the broad National Priority and Goal. You may apply for either the National Goal and/or your region’s goal.

<b>Priority #3A: General Multi-Organizational Meetings</b>	
NATIONAL	Regional Stranding and Entanglement Response Network Conferences or additional appropriate domestic meetings or conferences.
AKR PIR SER	Covered under National Goal.
WCR	Organize and host a West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network regional meeting in 2026 in coordination with NOAA Fisheries Regional Stranding Coordinators.
GAR	Organize and host an in-person GAR regional meeting (GARCon) in 2025 or 2026 in coordination with NOAA Fisheries Regional Stranding Coordinators.

<b>Priority #3B: Collaborative Response Preparedness</b>	
NATIONAL	Improving preparedness for collaborative response events including large whale necropsies, oil spill response, mass strandings, and natural disasters involving marine mammals.
PIR WCR GAR SER	Covered under National Goal.
AKR	In coordination with NOAA Fisheries Regional Stranding Coordinator, organize and host large whales necropsy training including documenting human interactions (e.g., vessel strike) particularly when time and resources are limited (e.g., window protocol). Training should include webinar(s) to reach as many

	participants as possible as well as opportunities to shadow or participate in necropsies with experienced individuals. This could include travel to bring experienced necropsy team leaders in to lead and train local responders or travel for responders to participate in large whale necropsies being led by experienced necropsy team leaders in other regions of Alaska.
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<b>Priority #3C: Large Whale Entanglement Response Training</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Increase the number of higher level (Level 3, 4 and 5) entanglement responders, particularly in Alaska, Pacific Islands, West Coast, and Greater Atlantic Regions.
<b>AKR PIR SER</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>WCR</b>	Provide large whale entanglement response training throughout the Pacific Northwest to authorized groups and responders. This organization would provide training by their Level 3 or 4 responders. This application may include purchase of response tools and safety gear, cover vessel costs and fuel, purchase education and outreach materials, and would provide quarterly updates on the Pacific Northwest Entanglement call.
<b>GAR</b>	Support for level 3 or 4 responders to attend/conduct refresher large whale entanglement trainings.

**Priority #4. Outreach & Education**

Support directed outreach and education to raise awareness for stranding and entanglement response, promote near real-time reporting, engage local communities to build stronger partnerships, and manage public expectations about marine mammal stranding and entanglement response. Projects that develop meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations, particularly those from underserved communities, are strongly encouraged. Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project. Applicants may refer to the [NAAEE’s Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence](#) in developing their project plans for engagement of target audiences and download [NAAEE’s guidelines pdf](#).

**Below are tables with two Priority #4 National Goals “A” and “B” ( in no particular order).**

There may be additional specific goals within some regions (AKR = Alaska Region; PIR = Pacific Islands Region; WCR = West Coast Region; GAR = Greater Atlantic Region; SER = Southeast Region), which are under the broad National Priority and Goal. You may apply for either the National Goal and/or your region’s goal

<b>Priority #4A: Educate Public</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Providing outreach to educate the community about marine mammals, safe viewing, human interaction, and managing public expectations for stranding response.
<b>AKR PIR SER</b>	Covered under National Goal.
<b>WCR</b>	Public outreach is particularly needed in this region.

<b>GAR</b>	Develop education messaging or materials geared towards reducing human interaction and harassment in live pinnipeds and small cetaceans on shore, and boating or fishing near free swimming large whales. Educate state and local government organizations (e.g., law enforcement, fire departments, lifeguards, environmental management agencies) on how to respond to stranding events more effectively.
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<b>Priority #4B: Paid Internships</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Paid internships/externships/apprentices to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.
<b>AKR PIR WCR GAR SER</b>	All regions covered under National Goal.

**Priority #5. Diagnostic Labs & Other National or Multi-Regional Services**

Support collaborative, multi-organizational scientific, diagnostic, and response services provided to the Stranding and Entanglement Response Networks to enhance data collection, analyses, and improve understanding of marine mammal health, strandings, entanglements, and rehabilitation.

Below is a table with three Priority #5 National Goals from “A” to “C” ( in no particular order). This priority only considers National Goals.

<b>Priority #5A, B, C: Diagnostic Labs &amp; Other National or Multi-Regional Services</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<p><b>5A.</b> Increasing Stranding Network diagnostic capabilities by providing diagnostics, disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, or histopathology services.</p> <p><b>5B.</b> Performing and interpreting of additional services to improve understanding of marine mammal health and strandings and/or entanglements. Examples of services include, but are not limited to: hearing testing, imaging, gas analyses, tooth aging, genetics, stomach content analysis, parasites, stable isotopes, gear analyses, sample archiving/preservation, epidemiology, etc.</p> <p><b>5C.</b> Providing tags, post-release monitoring, analysis, and interpretation of telemetry data from stranded, out-of-habitat, entangled, or rehabilitated and released cetaceans and pinnipeds.</p>

**Priority #6. Research & Development**

Develop scientific research projects designed to test hypotheses about marine mammal strandings, entanglements, and/or health/health trends, utilizing data from living and dead stranded and/or wild marine mammals. Develop tools, techniques, tests, treatments, etc. for stranded, entangled, and/or injured/distressed marine mammals.

Data or samples may be collected from stranded or entangled animals as well as bycaught, subsistence hunted, or “free-swimming” wild animals, if those animals serve as controls or for comparisons in specific scientific study designs. If using non-stranded wild animals such as from subsistence use, by-caught, or field research on free-swimming animals, the proposal must link the use of these animals/samples from these animals to known or suspected health issues of stranded marine mammals, to the health status of the population, or to the development and validation of new tools and techniques to assess such health conditions. Projects involving non-ESA-listed or non-MMPA depleted species should provide data/information on how the project objective will address conservation management needs.

For investigations of pathogen impacts on population health or strandings, you may want to refer to the [Pathogen Prioritization list](#).

**Below is a table with three Priority #6 National Goals from “A” to “C” ( in no particular order).** This priority only considers National Goals.

<b>Priority #6A, B, C: Research &amp; Development</b>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<p><b>6A.</b> Developing, testing, and evaluating tools and/or treatments, to determine efficacy for stranded, entangled, and/or injured/distressed marine mammals (e.g., point of care diagnostics, tag designs, refloating aids, remote sedation, entanglement tools, etc.).</p> <p><b>6B.</b> Investigating emerging diseases, climate change impacts (e.g., extreme flood events, harmful algae blooms, etc.), and/or other developing issues that may impact marine mammal health, strandings, and/or entanglements.</p> <p><b>6C.</b> Conducting analyses and interpretations of marine mammal population health, stranding, and/or entanglement data.</p>

### **C. Program Authority**

Authority 16 U.S.C. 1421 f-1

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. Funding Availability**

Given that the demand for funding regularly exceeds the Prescott Grant Program’s award budget, the following guidelines, for 1-year and multi-year proposals, will be implemented in an effort to maximize funding opportunities to as many applicants as possible.

For 1-year proposals:

1. A maximum proposal period of 1 year (12-month period).
2. Most single organization, 1-year proposals may request and be awarded for a maximum federal award amount of up to \$125,000.
3. A limited number of 1-year proposals may request and be awarded for a maximum award amount of up to \$150,000, if they meet the following criteria:
  - a. Single-organization, 1-year proposals that are exceptionally strong, as demonstrated by an average technical review score of at least 95 points or higher.

OR

b. Collaborative with any combination of at least 3 of the following: stranding agreement holders, local/state agencies, Tribal governments, diagnostic/ service labs, and/or researchers.

For multi-year proposals:

1. A maximum proposal period of 2 years (two, consecutive, 12-month periods).
2. May be considered for a maximum total award amount of up to \$200,000, with no more than \$100,000 in incremental funding provided per 12-month period.
3. Multi-year proposals must be collaborative with any combination of at least 2 of the following: stranding agreement holders, local/state agencies, Tribal governments, diagnostic/service labs, and/or researchers.
4. Primary collaborating entities who receive multi-year awards may not apply for another Prescott grant in the first year of their project (e.g., if multi-year award funds are received from the FY25 competition you could not apply for the FY26 competition, but could apply in the FY27 competition).

Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs. If an applicant incurs any costs before receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, the applicant would do so solely at its own risk of these costs not being reimbursed by the government or not receiving an award. No grant award may exceed \$150,000 in any 12-month period (16 U.S.C. 1421f-1).

Awards are dependent upon the availability of federal funding as provided by Congress. The fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget has not been finalized by Congress and could result in unknown funding scenarios. Applicants are not guaranteed any level of funding. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and there is no guarantee that funds will be appropriated or that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects or any projects. Publication of this notice does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years beyond the award period.

If funds become available, NOAA estimates that approximately ten to 40 awards may be made, depending on the amount of funds appropriated. Funds may be set aside from the annual appropriation to provide emergency assistance awards to eligible Stranding and Entanglement Response Network participants. These emergency funds will be available until expended during the period of fiscal availability.

See Section V. "Application Review Information" to learn more about "Evaluation Criteria", "Review and Selection Process", and "Selection Factors".

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

To accommodate award processing times, project start dates should be no earlier than August 1, 2025. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the first month and end on the last day of the last month of the project period.

If you cannot complete your project aims within the specified project period and have funds remaining, NOAA will consider providing a no-cost extension (NCE). A NCE extends the original project period, allowing the completion of project aims without additional funds being provided by NOAA. If the money is expended and funds are needed to continue the project, the applicant should submit another proposal during the next competitive award cycle.

For non-research awards you must have a project-related reason to extend your project end date. Extensions may not be obtained for the sole purpose of spending remaining funds. This action must be taken before the project period ends, and grantees are required to notify the NOAA Federal Program Officer at least 30 days before the end of the award to discuss the possibility of a NCE. In general, a project period can be extended up to 12-months. A maximum of 3 NCEs may be granted for a project. However, NCEs are not guaranteed and must be justified based on the unforeseen challenges, delays, or hardships.

If your award is a research award then you may have expanded authority. In this instance you may notify the NOAA Federal Program Officer at least 10 days before the end of the award, with a justification requesting that you would like to extend the award for up to 12-months. A NCE based on expanded authority may only be used once.

Multi-year proposals may be funded in one-year (12-month period) increments depending on available funds and terms of the award. Multi-year awards do not compete for funding in subsequent budget periods within the approved award period. Rather, any funding required for subsequent years is added to the multi-year award incrementally, provided satisfactory performance by the recipient is demonstrated and provided funds are available to support the continuation of the project. If a grant recipient wishes to continue work on a funded project beyond the project period and obligated award funds have not been expended by the end of this period, the recipient must notify the assigned Federal Program Officer no later than 30 days prior to the end of the award period to determine eligibility for a no-cost extension. If, however, the money is expended and funds are needed to continue the project, the applicant should submit another proposal during the next competitive award cycle or seek an alternate source of funding.

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

Under this solicitation, NOAA will fund Prescott projects as grants or cooperative agreements, as appropriate for the nature of the project. Where a cooperative agreement is issued, the nature of NOAA's "substantial involvement" will generally be a collaboration between NOAA and a Recipient on the scope of work. Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Chapter 5. C of the [Department of Commerce \(DOC\) Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual](#).

## **III. Eligibility Information**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

All applicants must submit a Prescott Letter of Eligibility with the application in order to be considered for an award. The Prescott Letter of Eligibility states that you and/or your organization are either a Stranding or Entanglement Response Network participant in good standing, or collaborating with a Stranding or Entanglement Response Network member. In addition, the Letter of Eligibility must state whether you are a new applicant who has never had a Prescott application accepted and reviewed during the technical review process of a previous Prescott competition.

For Priority # 1, 2, 3, and 4 (stranding operations, entanglement response, workshops/training, and outreach), proposals applicants may request a letter from their [NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinator](#).

For Priority # 5 and 6 (service and diagnostic laboratory, or research), proposal applicants may request a letter from the [Prescott Grant Program Manager](#), ([arthur.wong@noaa.gov](mailto:arthur.wong@noaa.gov)). Diagnostic laboratories should include a summary of their capabilities, services proposed, and their turn-around time (if applicable), as part of their request. For research applications (Priority #6), the applicant does not need to be a Stranding or Entanglement Response Network participant but must provide in the proposal a letter of collaboration from one or more participants in good standing that will work with them on the proposed activities.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary federal, local/state permits and approvals (including co-investigator and/or researcher authorization letters) prior to awarding of funds. Please see the [Prescott Grant Program FAQs](#) to learn more about eligibility, permits, and approvals. For further information on permit requirements and application procedures, please contact the [Prescott Grant Program Manager](#).

For these additional authorizations, the applicant must be able to provide the entire permit or approval prior to award funding, but is not required to submit the permit with the application. Receipt of required MMPA (and ESA, if applicable) scientific research and enhancement permits, verification of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval, or other authorizations will be required prior to awarding of funds. The awarding of funds will be delayed if other federal, local/state permits are not obtained.

For coverage under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), applications will be reviewed to determine if the proposed activities were analyzed in the Final [Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#) (FPEIS) for the MMHSRP. For those activities analyzed in the FPEIS, no further environmental documentation will be required. For applications whose activities were not analyzed in the FPEIS, program staff will ensure sufficient environmental documentation has been provided to determine the appropriate level of environmental analysis (EA) needed to comply with NEPA. Proposal activities may be categorically excluded, or an EA may be necessary. For those applications needing an EA, affected applicants will be informed after the peer review stage. Applicants will be requested to assist in the preparation of an EA by providing all necessary information to complete the assessment prior to the awarding of funds.

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

Pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a, the match requirement does not apply to the U.S. insular areas (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

For applicants from all other areas, the proposed budget must provide a minimum non-federal cost-share (match) of 25% of the total budget (i.e.,  $0.25 \times \text{total project costs} = \text{total non-federal share}$ ). Therefore, the total federal share will be 75% or less of the total budget.

To reduce calculation errors when determining the match, we recommend using the [Prescott Grant Cost-Share Calculator](#). The match amount must be a whole number, so please round up.

Below is a manual calculation example:

Federal = \$125,000 (75% of Total =  $0.75 \times \$166,667 = \$125,000$ )  
Match = \$41,667 (25% of Total =  $0.25 \times \$166,667 = \$41,667$ )  
Total = \$166,667

The match may be > 25% of the total budget. However, please keep in mind if awarded the match amount is binding and must be fulfilled.

Applicants should understand that any cost-share committed to the Prescott Grant Program cannot be applied to any other federal grant program. If a proposal does not meet the minimum cost-share requirements, it will not be considered for further review in this annual funding cycle. NOAA will review the valuation of the applicant's proposed non-federal cost-share according to 2 C.F.R. 200.306. This regulation describes valuation for property or services contributed by the applicant as well as third-party in-kind contributions, which are specifically allowed by the Prescott Grant Program statute and 2 C.F.R. 200.306. An in-kind contribution is a non-cash contribution, including such contributions donated or loaned, by a third party to the applicant. In many cases, the value of in-kind services or property used to fulfill a non-federal cost-share will be the fair market value of the services or property. The fair market value is the cost of obtaining such services or property, had they not been donated, or of obtaining such services or property for the period of a loan. The applicant must document any third-party in-kind services or property used to fulfill the non-federal cost share.

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

There is no limit on the number of proposals (single, or multi-year) that can be submitted by the same Stranding or Entanglement Response Network, local/state agencies, Tribal governments, service lab or researcher participant during the FY 2025 competitive grant cycle. However, Stranding or Entanglement Response Network, local/state agencies, Tribal governments will receive no more than two awards (any combination of single or multi year) per year as part of the competitive program. All proposals submitted by the same applicant must be for completely independent projects that are clearly separate in their objectives, goals, and budget requests and must be successful in the competitive review process.

Service labs or researchers providing services or conducting research that are not independently authorized under Sections 112(c) or 109(h) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1382(c) and 1379(h), respectively), can only receive one award per year as part of the competitive grant cycle.

If a multi-year proposal is awarded, the primary collaborating entities may not apply for another Prescott grant in the first year of their project.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### A. Address to Request Application Package

Both this NOFO and application instructions for this grant program are available via the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Applicants without internet access can obtain application instructions by contacting the [Prescott Grant Program Manager \(arthur.wong@noaa.gov\)](mailto:arthur.wong@noaa.gov), (301) 427-8454.

Dr. Arthur Wong  
NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources(F/PR)  
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13604  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

### B. Content and Form of Application

Please see the [NOAA Grant Application Process website](#) for eRA Commons related registration and submission information.

Please see the [Prescott Application Checklist](#) to help you with your application.

The following [federal forms](#) are required as part of each application:

- Project Abstract Summary \*new form\*
- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, Assurances, Non-Construction Programs
- CD-511, Certifications Regarding Lobbying
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

For Construction (only if construction cost is  $\geq$  50% of federal budget request):

- SF424C, Budget Information, Construction Programs
- SF424D, Assurances, Construction Programs

Proposals and all attachments should be at least in 10-point font. Spacing and margins should be consistent throughout the document. If possible, please submit proposal documents as PDF files to ensure conversion errors do not occur when proposal documents are later accessed in NOAA's grants system (zip files, jpeg, and password-protected PDF files cannot be converted and should not be part of a proposal submission) . NOAA's grants system refers to eRA Commons, or any other subsequent system so designated by NOAA. For applicants submitting proposals by mail, the SF-424 must be signed in ink or signed by using a valid electronic signature or digital signature.

The following proposal documents are also required as part of each application:

**1) Proposal Narrative (ten-page limit): Describe the project activities completely and accurately. The project description should be a clear statement of all work to be undertaken. It must include the information listed below in (a)-(g).**

**1a) Priorities and Goals:**

- List Priorities and Goals (Section I.B.) in order of most to least relevant to the project.
- State the expected project accomplishments and their significance to the marine mammal health, stranding and entanglement response, and/or rehabilitation community.
- State the project objectives. Objectives should be attainable within the specified time period and with the available monetary and human resources described/listed. Objectives should be simple, understandable, and as specific and quantitative as possible based on historic stranding data in the region.

**1b) Project Management:** Describe how the proposed project will be organized and managed, including financial management of the project. Roles of participants should be explained, including:

- Principal Investigator - An application may only have one designated Principal Investigator.
- Co-Investigators - Other project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project.
- Cooperators - Organizations or individuals that support the project.
- Subcontracts - If any portion of the project will be conducted through subcontracts, follow the [procurement guidance for federal awards](#) (2 CFR 200.317-.327). Describe how provisions for competitive subcontracting will be met, if applicable. If the contractor has been identified, please provide a statement of their qualifications or background.

**1c) Project Description:** Describe the scientific or technical plan of activities that will be accomplished to meet the proposed project goals and objectives. Include detailed descriptions of activities and expected results from the completed project. The project description should include:

- i) Detailed description of project activities with associated timelines and milestones, including:
  - How they relate to the project's goals and objectives.
  - How they relate to the Prescott Grant Program priorities
  - How they will be applied and/or made available to others through outreach and education
  - Who will conduct each activity?
  - What external factors influence the timeline (e.g., pupping season)?
- ii) Specify the quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation criteria to determine the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals, objectives, and milestones.

iii) Identify if this is a re-submission of a previously unfunded Prescott Grant application and, if so, include a brief description of how the new proposal has been revised in response to prior reviewers' comments.

**1d) Environmental Impacts:** For coverage under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), applications will be reviewed to determine if the proposed activities were analyzed in the Final [Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#) (FPEIS) for the MMHSRP. See Section III (Eligibility).

**1e) Need for Federal Assistance:** Demonstrate the need for government financial assistance. List all other sources of funding that exist or have been sought for the project.

**1f) Federal, Local/State Agencies, Tribal Government Programs and Activities:** List any federal, local/state agencies, Tribal government programs and activities that this project would affect and reference any corresponding documentation (i.e., permits, approvals, and environmental assessments).

**1g) Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant:** Describe how governmental and non-governmental entities, particularly other members of the marine mammal health and stranding and entanglement response communities will participate in the project and the nature of their participation. Additionally, describe how this project will broaden the participation of traditionally underrepresented groups in marine mammal science.

**2) Organizational Summary (three-page limit):** Provide a summary of your organization and the role your organization plays in the Marine Mammal Stranding and/or Entanglement Response Network. The summary must include (if applicable): a map of your response area; response statistics (i.e., number of strandings/year, species, etc.); organizational overview (i.e., number of paid staff, paid interns/externs, volunteers, researchers, etc.); size and capacity of your facility; a summary of your relationship with neighboring Stranding and/or Entanglement Response Network responders; and a financial overview of your facility, including what funds are available for the proposed work. A [sample organizational summary](#) is available.

**3) Data Sharing Plan (two-page limit):** Provide a data sharing plan that includes descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project, and how it will be shared [note: expectation is that data are made publicly available]; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. Please see the [Prescott Grant Program Data Management Guidance](#) document. The plan will be reviewed as part of the Evaluation Criteria described in Section V.

**4) Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) - (two-page limit):** Briefly summarize your organization's DE&I policy. This may include:

- Describing how your organization cultivates a diverse workforce through its hiring practices, recruitment efforts, and support of employees and interns/externs (i.e., equitable pay, health benefits, paid time off).
- Discussing your organization's efforts to broaden the participation of groups that are underrepresented in STEM by improving outreach and education within your community.

- Identifying current inequities and/or shortcomings and describing efforts that are underway to meet higher standards of DE&I within your organization.

The MMHSRP strives to build an inclusive environment in which we support diversity (including, but not limited to, age, race, national, cultural, and socio-economic background, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and physical ability) to achieve our mission goals and objectives, and maximize the potential of the Stranding and Entanglement Response Networks as a whole. “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 DE&I improves creativity, productivity, and the vitality of the marine mammal community in which the MMHSRP engages.

**5) Budget Information (no page limit):** All budget information in the proposal documents should match the SF-424A (Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs) form. The amounts per category and total amounts indicated on the form must correspond with the amounts indicated on all other proposal documents. The federal and non-federal columns must be filled in completely and separately.

Each application must also have a detailed budget narrative **and** a corresponding spreadsheet describing the total project costs, including contributions and donations. Please refer to [NOAA's budget narrative guidance](#) for developing a proper budget justification.

The budget narrative must justify the itemized costs per category between federal and non-federal shares and the corresponding direct and indirect cost totals. For the non-federal share, the itemized costs in the budget narrative and spreadsheet should be separated into the applicant and third-party in-kind contributions. If third-party in-kind contributions are included, briefly describe the method for calculating the value of these contributions. A [sample budget spreadsheet](#) is available.

**5a) Equipment Descriptions:** The budget narrative should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary to the successful completion of the proposed project. **“Equipment” is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more (unless the applicant organization has established lower levels) and expected service life of more than one year.** Any items that do not meet the threshold for equipment can be included under the supplies line item. Please note that any general use equipment (e.g., computers, etc.) that is charged directly to the award should be allocated to the award according to the expected usage on the project. Equipment procured for the project is subject to [procurement guidance for federal awards](#) (2 CFR 200.317-.327).

**5b) Indirect costs:** This includes overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. This may be calculated by one of the methods below:

- i) Applicants may propose to use a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). For NOAA NICRA assistance see “Section VII. Agency Contacts”. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce (DOC) Standard Terms and Conditions.

ii) Any non-federal entity that does not have a NICRA, except those non-federal entities described in the [revised federal regulation](#) (§ 200.414 (f)), may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in [federal regulation](#) (2 CFR 200.412), costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all federal awards until a non-federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time.

**5c) Salaries and fringe benefits:** Funds may be requested only for personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. If funds are requested for a staff position that is not currently filled by personnel, a position description must be provided with the Supporting Documentation (see Section IV. B.7.i “Position Descriptions”).

**5d) Travel:** Funds may be requested for domestic travel only, such as to professional meetings and conferences (see Section IV. F.). This travel should be directly related to proposal objectives .

**6) Appendices (15-page limit): Additional material in support of project goals and objectives may be provided** (e.g., tables, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, slide shows, and other pictorial presentations).

**7) Supporting Documentation (no page limit): The following supporting documentation is required for all proposal, as listed below (a)-(i):**

**7a) Prescott Letter of Eligibility:** See requirements in Section III, Eligibility Information.

**7b) Results of Previous Prescott Awards:** If any Principal Investigator/Co-Investigator on the application has received Prescott Grant Program awards, the following information is required for each annual competitive and emergency grant received in the past three years:

- i) Award number, amount, and period of support;
- ii) Title of the project;
- iii) Brief summary of the results of the completed work including a brief description of available data, samples, physical collections, and other related research projects (1-2 paragraphs)
- iv) Publications resulting from the award (do not include copies of the publications in the application)
- v) If the current application is for renewed or continuing support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

If the most recent Prescott grant was awarded more than three years ago, the information listed above is required only for the most recent grant. Do not submit copies of publications, progress, or final reports.

**7c) Resumes (maximum 4 pages):** Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators, and named Collaborators must each provide a resume summarizing their relevant experience.

**7d) Letters of Collaboration:** A letter of collaboration is required from all external collaborators listed in the proposal (i.e. not at the same institution as the PI/applicant) describing and agreeing to the specific activities each participant would perform.

**7e) Letters of Reference for New Applicants Only (optional):** New applicants may submit up to 3 letters of reference introducing them to Prescott reviewers and supporting their proposal. References may be National Marine Mammal Stranding or Entanglement Response Network participants or other entities.

**7f) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (optional):** While a copy of the signed, approved NICRA is not required with the application package, it will be required prior to approval of a grant award.

**7g) Permits, Authorizations, IACUC Approvals, and Complete Environmental Analyses:** Applicants requiring MMPA/ESA scientific research and enhancement permits must include a copy of the cover letter of their permit(s) or their request for such permit. Projects requiring IACUC review must include a copy of their IACUC approval or request for such approval.

**7h) Equipment Details & Quotes (optional):** Supporting documentation regarding any piece of equipment (with a cost over \$10,000) and/or the basis for its cost estimate.

**7i) Position Descriptions:** Applicants requesting funds for new staff positions or staff positions that are vacant at the time of application submission must provide a detailed position description for each vacancy. The position description should include the qualifications, skills, and requirements necessary to fill the vacancy.

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

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

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

### **D. Submission Dates and Times**

Applications must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and time-stamped on or before 11:59 p.m. ET (Grants.gov) or local time (postmark and delivery service), October 30, 2024.

**Hardship Exemption.** The MMHSRP reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format (i.e., hard copy submission, facsimile, or via electronic mail). However, all applications must be postmarked by the deadline unless an extension has been granted for an “extenuating circumstance” following the submission of a Hardship Exemption Request.

In the event of an extenuating circumstance (e.g., a natural or anthropogenic disaster, validated service disruption in a specific area, or the sudden acute severe illness or death of the Project Investigator/Authorized Representative or their immediate family member) that interferes with an organization’s ability to meet a proposal submission deadline, there can be flexibility for obtaining an extension to the announced deadline date that may be granted on a case-by-case basis with approval from the Program Office.

Applicants facing extenuating circumstances and in need of an extension should contact the [Prescott Grant Program Manager](#), ([arthur.wong@noaa.gov](mailto:arthur.wong@noaa.gov); (301) 427-8454), and submit a Hardship Exemption Request to seek an extension for late proposal submission. Requests for extensions should ideally be received by the Program Office on or before 11:59 pm ET on the day of the grant application deadline of October 30, 2024, and no later than 48 hours after the regular deadline.

The Hardship Exemption Request should include a description of the hardship circumstances and a proposed new deadline up to 14 calendar days after the regular grant application deadline. Applicants must contact the Program Office via e-mail (or telephone, if email is unavailable) regarding Hardship Exemption Requests.

The Program Office will review the request and inform the applicant whether an extension can be accommodated. Applicants that are provided an extension should follow the written or verbal guidance provided by the Program Office regarding methods of submission for their application(s). The Program Office can accommodate an extension of the deadline up to a maximum of 14 calendar days and will work with each impacted organization on a case-by-case basis to address their specific issue and needs.

## **E. Intergovernmental Review**

Applications submitted under this program are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs".

## **F. Funding Restrictions**

**International Travel.** Travel outside the United States, such as to conferences, will not be funded.

**Not Allowable Costs.** Fees, fundraising activities, travel for federal employees, salaries for federal employees, or profits are not allowed.

## **G. Other Submission Requirements**

We recommend submitting your application in [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (<http://www.grants.gov>), which will allow you to fill, save, and submit required federal forms online, along with all other application documents. NOAA strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov. Please see Registration requirements below.

### **Registration requirements**

NOTE: Please see the [NOAA Grant Application Process website](#) for eRA Commons related registration and submission information. We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

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

### 1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

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

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

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

### 2. eRA Commons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3. Grants.Gov

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

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

<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

### **Submission Validation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you experience a Grants.gov “systems issue” (e.g., technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website, receipt of an error message) that you believe threatens your ability to complete submission before the application deadline, please (i) print, screenshot, video, or otherwise document any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Help Desk at 1-800-518-4726 for assistance. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week excluding federal holidays. Applicants need to obtain a case number regarding communications with Grants.gov.

If the applicant experiences a “systems issue” with Grants.gov that prevented the timely submission of the proposal, the applicant must take the necessary steps to document the issue (e.g., screenshots or video recording of error messages) and contact the Prescott Grant Program Manager as soon as possible. \*\*Note: problems with an applicant organization’s computer system, email account, equipment, or failure to comply with the Grants.gov system requirements are not considered “systems issues.” Similarly, an applicant’s failure to (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered Authorized Representative submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are not considered “systems issues”. A Grants.gov “systems issue” is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely.

## H. Address for Submitting Proposals

If you cannot submit your application via Grants.gov, for any reason, a hard copy of the application will be accepted. One signed original (can be printed double-sided) of the complete proposal package may be submitted by postal mail or commercial delivery and post marked by the submission deadline to the following address:

Dr. Arthur Wong  
NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources (F/PR)  
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13604  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

After posting, please contact: ([arthur.wong@noaa.gov](mailto:arthur.wong@noaa.gov)), (301) 427-8454 with the name of the carrier service and tracking number, and provide a copy of your receipt.

## V. Application Review Information

### Evaluation Criteria

Suggested Scoring Guidance:

- (90 and above) Proposal elements can be achieved with outstanding effectiveness and efficiency, and there is high certainty that the project will have substantial benefit. Only the most exceptional proposals may achieve this score
- (89-80) Proposal elements can be achieved effectively and efficiently. There is high certainty that the project will have moderate to substantial benefit.
- (79-70) Proposal elements can be achieved adequately. It is likely that the project will have moderate benefit.

- (69-60) Proposal elements can be achieved minimally. There is high or moderate certainty that the project will have limited benefit.
- (59 and below) Proposal elements cannot be achieved. There is high or moderate certainty that the project will not be successful.

Proposals will be evaluated by technical reviewers based on the following criteria.

<b>1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 30</b>
<p><b>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.</b></p> <p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, local/state, Tribal, or regional activities, and assesses the project's broader impacts. For the Prescott Grant Program Competition, this includes importance and relevance to the Goal(s) of the selected Prescott Grant Program Priority, the Principal Investigator's record of making their data accessible and usable by the scientific community, and the procedures described in the Data Sharing Plan. Reviewers will consider: the likelihood of meeting project milestones and achieving anticipated results in the stated time period; the Data Sharing Plan; the contribution of potential outcomes, results, or products to the marine mammal stranding, rehabilitation, and entanglement response communities; and the amount of collaboration with other stranding network participants. (Score = 0-30 points)</p>	
<b>2. Technical/scientific merit</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 30</b>
<p><b>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.</b></p> <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. Proposals will be scored on their clear identification of goals and objectives and appropriate performance evaluation methods. Proposals should have sufficient information to enable reviewers to provide a technical evaluation of the project. The evaluation will be based upon the technical design's strengths and/or weaknesses relative to obtaining productive and meaningful results. (Score = 0-30 points)</p>	
<b>3. Overall qualifications of applicants</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 15</b>
<p><b>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.</b></p> <p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Project management will be evaluated based upon documentation of related experience and qualifications of the Principal Investigator, Co- Investigator(s), and other personnel. Other personnel includes designated contractors, consultants, and Cooperators. The results of any previous Prescott awards (if applicable) will be considered when evaluating applicant qualifications. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which the applicant complied effectively with the application instructions in this Announcement. Points may be deducted for failure to follow application instructions. (Score = 0-15 points)</p>	
<b>4. Project costs</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 15</b>
<p><b>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.</b></p>	

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. The proposed costs and overall budget of the project will be evaluated according to the proposed work. Itemized costs and the overall budget must be justified and appropriately allocated. (Score = 0-15 points)

<b>5. Outreach and Education</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 5</b>
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**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.**

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. Applications will be evaluated on whether project results or products will be shared appropriately given the nature of the proposed work and whether sufficient detail is provided to make this determination. This may include how the project's approach(es), implementation, and outcomes will be disseminated to relevant audiences beyond those participating directly in the project. Depending on the nature of the project, outreach and education may include: community outreach events or public lectures; peer-reviewed publications; training events; paid apprenticeships/internships/externships; presentations at professional meetings, schools, and Stranding and Entanglement Response Network conferences; development of brochures, education materials, training manuals, or websites; or distribution of project results to the Stranding and Entanglement Response Network, and other interested audiences. Proposals should be rated on whether the outreach/education discussed is appropriate for the type and nature of the proposal and whether the outreach/education is expected to be effective. (Score = 0- 5 points)

<b>6. Diversity, equity and inclusion</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 5</b>
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This criterion assesses the extent to which the project will promote DE&I. This can be both internally (within the applicant organization) and externally. Some examples within organizations may include: the use of paid internships/externships/apprentices to increase opportunities and reduce barriers to participation of underrepresented groups to participate in the field of marine mammal science; addressing current inequities and/or shortcomings within the organization; and describing efforts that are underway to meet higher standards of DE&I. External promotion of DE&I can include engagement with underserved communities (e.g., minority, low-income, rural, Tribal, and indigenous populations) through project activities, education and outreach, etc. If the project engages underserved audiences, there should be robust partnerships in place that will ensure the underserved community's residents and/or organizations are engaged in the project and their needs are addressed. (Score = 0-5 points).

## Review and Selection Process

Review and selection of applications will take place in five steps: initial evaluation, technical review, program review, selection by the Selecting Official (Office of the Director, NMFS Office of Protected Resources or designee), and approval by the NOAA Grants Officer.

1. Initial Evaluation of the Applications. NMFS Office of Protected Resources will screen applications to ensure they:

- Were received on time by the official deadline (or by an extended deadline granted for an "extenuating circumstance" as defined above).
- Provided a budget with at least 25% non-Federal cost share (match).
- Provided a Prescott Letter of Eligibility.

If an application does not conform to the minimum requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed (original deadline or negotiated extended deadline due to an “extenuating circumstance”), the application will be withdrawn from further consideration in the competition. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

We are under no obligation to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application and resubmit your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it.

Applications that pass the initial screening will be grouped based on the applicant’s main Priority in their proposal and passed on to technical review.

2. Technical Review. Each accepted application will undergo a technical review by participants in the National Marine Mammal Stranding and Entanglement Response Network or other qualified persons (e.g., scientists, researchers, Stranding Network participants from foreign countries, etc., consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1421f-1(c)).

Technical reviewers will be asked to evaluate individual proposals based on the funding priorities identified by the applicant and the Evaluation Criteria. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three individual reviewers. Applications will generally be reviewed and scored by individuals from a different NMFS region than the applicant to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. However, for highly specialized subject matter, applications may be reviewed by technical experts and scientists from the same NMFS region as the applicant. A technical review will be conducted in a panel format with reviewers providing individual, independent reviews for each proposal, not as a consensus. There may be panel members present for the discussion that are from the same NMFS Regional Stranding and Entanglement Response Networks. Applications from groups new to the Prescott Grant Program will be grouped together for review by the assigned panel, and reviewed separately from applicants that have applied before.

Each technical reviewer must certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the proposal(s) they are reviewing prior to their review. Each panelist will be required to identify potential conflicts of interest with proposals being reviewed by their panel. Reviewers with conflicts of interest will not be present during those proposal discussions.

Scores and comments for proposals will be completed during the technical review meetings. Technical review scores will be used to numerically rank the proposals and provide comments on each proposal. To determine the appropriateness of each proposal to the Prescott Grant Program’s funding priorities, the technical reviewers will provide independent reviews using 6 scoring criterion, and assign up to the maximum number of points for each criterion. The points for each criterion will be added together, providing a total final score, with a maximum possible score of 100 points. Given the nature and quality of the submitted proposals, only the most competitive proposals, those scoring 60 points or more, will move on to the program review panel. The less competitive proposals will not be reviewed further.

3. Program Review Panel. A panel of federal NMFS employees, consisting of at least three national and regional staff, consulting with the Marine Mammal Commission, will further evaluate the most competitive applications. Based on the rank order from the technical reviews, the Program Review Panel will apply the following considerations that may result in revisions to the rank order, based on Section 408 of the MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1421f-1(b)(4)(B):

- Equitable distribution of funds among stranding regions, including the subregions. Equitable distribution will be determined using the best available data on episodic stranding, entanglement or mortality events (except for unusual mortality events) that occurred in any stranding region in the preceding year; average annual strandings, entanglements, and mortality events per stranding region; sizes of marine mammal populations inhabiting each region; the importance of the region's marine mammal populations to the well-being of indigenous communities; and the conservation of protected, depleted, threatened, or endangered marine mammal species. The Panel may also consider the proportion of applications received per region, the actual stranding statistics per region, and stranding network effort or coverage per region.
- In addition, the Panel will consider technical review scores and comments, application materials, collaboration with other stranding network participants, track records for encouraging DE&I, and the applicant's history of providing scientific research and services.
- The Panel will strongly consider the applicant's history with past funding from the Prescott Grant Program, including any delinquencies in report submission, meeting the goals and objectives of prior awards, unexpended balances on active awards, and returned/deobligated funds from previous awards.
- In the event limited funding is appropriated for the Prescott Grant Program (\$1,000,000 or less), based on the statutory requirement for equitable distribution to the greatest extent practicable, the Panel will recommend funding at least one proposal from each NMFS Region to the extent possible and prioritize applications focusing on marine mammal strandings.

4. Selection Recommendations. The Selecting Official will make the final recommendations to the NOAA Grants Officer regarding which proposals will be funded based on recommendations of the Program Review Panel as well as the selection factors set forth in "Selection Factors". Justifications will be given for any recommendations that fall outside the technical review ranking, or for any cost adjustments.

5. Grants Management Division Approval. NOAA reserves the right to negotiate the budget and scope of work with any application that has been selected for an award, which may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NOAA may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NOAA may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories to the extent authorized. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official and prior to the issuance of an award, the NOAA Grants Management Division will conduct an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualification, or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that correspond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.208. Applicants may submit information to the System for Award Management (SAM) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of the applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NOAA Grants Officer are final.

## **Selection Factors**

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

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
  - a. geographically
  - b. by type of institution
  - c. by type of partners
  - d. by research priority
  - e. by project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

## Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, a technical review of proposals will occur during the four months following the proposal due date given in this announcement. Funding should begin during the summer of 2025 for most approved projects. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to August 1, 2025, unless otherwise directed by the Federal Program Officer.

Information about proposals received (organizational name, proposal title, and federal funding request) will be publicly shared on the [John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program](#) web page. Applicants that do not want their proposal information shared on this web page may contact the program office following the submission of their proposal.

Successful applicants will receive notification of funding from the NOAA Grants Management Division. Applicants should not initiate any project in expectation of federal funding until they receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA Grants Officer. A cooperative agreement will be utilized if the proposed work entails substantial involvement between the applicant and NMFS. The final determination of the funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be made by the NOAA Grants Management Division. After all successful applicants have been notified, a Federal Program Officer will notify unsuccessful applicants. Comments and scores from the technical review will be provided to all applicants. Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a minimum of twelve months and will then be destroyed.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

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

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

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

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **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.fsr.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

All progress reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each six-month period from the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 120 days after the award expiration. Additional reporting on project details may be required at the request of the Program Office. Grant recipients must submit any copies of publications printed with award funds (e.g., manuals, surveys, etc.) to the NMFS Federal Program Officer for dissemination to the public. Publications should be submitted either as hard copies or in an electronic version. Based on the location and the subject matter of the projected work, NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinators or MMHSRP staff will serve as Technical Monitors to advise the Program Officer. For projects taking place in more than one region, the Technical Monitor will be MMHSRP Headquarters staff.

## VII. Agency Contacts

**The Prescott Grant Program Manager is:**

Dr. Arthur Wong  
NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources (F/PR)  
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13604  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
([arthur.wong@noaa.gov](mailto:arthur.wong@noaa.gov)), (301) 427-8454

**The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:**

Jennifer Jackson, NOAA Grants Management Division  
1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
([jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov](mailto:jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov))

## VIII. Other Information

No federal employees or agencies are able to apply for federal assistance under this notice. In addition, federal employees shall not provide assistance in writing any application, writing letters of support for any application, or otherwise confer any unfair advantage on a particular application.

For activities involving collaboration with current NOAA programs, federal employees can write a letter verifying that they are collaborating with the project. This collaboration letter cannot support or endorse the applicant or project.

MMHSRP staff and NOAA Federal Program Officers can provide guidance on application procedures and the proper completion of required forms. Applications encompassing activities conducted under the authority of an MMPA/ESA scientific research or enhancement permit should not include a copy of the entire permit, but instead should include a copy of the cover letter only of the final permit or a Co- Investigator letter from the Principal Investigator verifying that the work is being conducted with their approval. Refer any questions about potential collaboration or support by federal employees to the Prescott Grant Manager (Section VII. Agency Contacts).

If a project is awarded, the award recipient, subrecipient, contractor, and/or subcontractor shall not sub-grant or sub-contract any part of the approved project to any agency of the DOC and/or other federal department, agency or instrumentality, without the prior written approval of the Grants Officer. Requests for approval of such action must be submitted to the Federal Program Officer who shall review and make a recommendation to the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer shall make the final determination with the concurrence of legal counsel of the DOC agency making the award, and legal counsel of the other federal department, agency or instrumentality receiving the subaward and/or contract. The Grants Officer will notify that Recipient in writing of the final determination ([DOC Standard Terms and Conditions, G.05](#))