

NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program (FY18)

FFO#: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2018-2005502

Questions and Answers

Q. What is resilience?

A. Resilience is the ability of an ecosystem or community to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events such as extreme weather or long-term changing environmental conditions.

Q. What is the Coastal Resilience Grants program?

A: Jointly managed by two NOAA offices, the Office for Coastal Management (National Ocean Service) and the Office of Habitat Conservation (National Marine Fisheries Service), the principal objective is implementing projects that increase the resilience of U.S. coastal communities and ecosystems. This program invests in collaborative projects that provide environmental and socioeconomic benefits.

Q. How much funding is being awarded through this competition in FY2018?

A. Dependent on FY2018 appropriations, NOAA intends to award up to \$9 million, for this competition.

Q: How will the current continuing resolution (CR) impact funding availability?

A. Grant awards are dependent on the availability of federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. This FFO is being released prior to final appropriations due to award processing timeframes. The FFO clearly states there is no guaranteed funding.

Q: Are there any changes from the FY2017 Coastal Resilience Grants FFO?

A: The FY17 grants process contained two separate focus areas—strengthening coastal communities and habitat restoration. For the strengthening coastal communities focus, select high-scoring applications from the FY2017 competition will be considered for funding in FY2018. For the coastal habitat restoration focus, new proposals will be solicited, and a pre-proposal is required.

Q: Why is a pre-proposal required for the FY2018 competition?

A: The deadline for a pre-proposals submission is March 7, 2018. The pre-proposal process will streamline the effort for applicants and the application reviewers. Only those projects closely

aligned with the goals of this Federal Funding Opportunity will be asked to submit a full proposal.

Q: How will the pre-proposal differ from a full proposal?

A: Applicants are requested to provide the Standard Form (SF)-424 and a two-page narrative as a pre-proposal. Pre-proposals must be submitted as an email attachment to resilience.grants@noaa.gov. The pre-proposal narrative should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to competition priorities. The pre-proposal process is a critical step to determine if proposed projects are well-suited for this specific competition. Only applicants whose pre-proposals strongly align with program objectives and goals will be invited to submit full proposals.

Q: Are all applicants who submit a pre-proposal eligible to submit a full proposal?

A: No. To be eligible, applicants must be invited to submit a full proposal. This invitation will be based on the strength of the pre-proposal. NOAA will directly contact pre-proposal applicants regarding their eligibility to submit a full proposal. Applicants eligible to submit a full proposal will be notified and advised of the full proposal deadline and given reviewer comments. Reviewer feedback will be available to all pre-proposal applicants upon request, regardless of whether they are invited to submit a full proposal.

Q: How many calendar days will applicants have to submit an application?

A: Pre-proposals are required to be submitted by March 7, 2018. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will have a minimum of 40 days to submit their full proposal to Grants.gov. They will be notified of the full proposal deadline when they receive their eligibility notification and reviewer comments. Cumulative days to prepare the pre-proposal and full proposal will total at least 80 days.

Q: How will submitted project applications be selected for funding under the FY2018 Federal Funding Opportunity?

A: Project selection is expected to be highly competitive. Applications are subject to rigorous reviews conducted by subject matter experts around the country and based on the criteria published in the Federal Funding Opportunity.

Q: Since there is no new competition for the strengthening coastal communities category for FY2018, how will projects meeting the goals of this category be considered and selected for funding?

A: Many strong proposals were received in FY2017 for this category – a total of 116 proposals requesting nearly \$93 million. In FY2018, select high-scoring proposals that were not selected for funding in FY2017 will be recommended for funding in FY2018. Projects selected will be those that best align with program priorities, objectives, and selection criteria described in the FY2017 FFO.

Q: Are there any funding match requirements?

A: Yes, federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds at a 2:1 ratio. For a project requesting \$500,000 in federal funding, for example, the award recipient would need to provide \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total project budget of \$750,000.

Q. When will funded projects be implemented?

A. NOAA plans to award projects by October 1, 2018.

Q. How many proposals has NOAA received for these grants in the past?

A. In the FY2017 competition, 167 proposals were submitted, requesting more than \$135 million in funding. 116 of those proposals were submitted under the strengthening coastal communities category (requesting a total of nearly \$93 million), and 51 were submitted under the habitat restoration category (requesting nearly \$43 million). In FY2017, NOAA awarded 19 projects that cover 17 states and Puerto Rico. These projects will improve the resilience of more than 350 coastal communities and restore 1,100 acres of habitat.

Q. What projects were funded through past Coastal Resilience Grants?

A. See the list at <https://coast.noaa.gov/resilience-grant/> and <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/current-and-past-resilience-projects>

Q. Can I see a copy of the merit reviews for project proposals not selected for funding under previous Coastal Resilience Grant FFOs?

A. Unsuccessful applicants were directly notified by NOAA at the end of prior competitions, and feedback was offered directly to the applicants. We do not publically share copies of the merit reviews or a list of unsuccessful applications.

Q. Will NOAA distribute other grant opportunities targeted to habitat restoration in FY2018?

A. Yes. In 2018, NOAA will publish a Federal Funding Opportunity through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Q. How does this opportunity relate to the Community-based Restoration Program?

A. Both the Community-based Restoration Program and Coastal Resilience Grants fund projects that aid in recovering listed species and rebuilding sustainable fish populations. However, a primary purpose of the Coastal Resilience Grants effort is to focus on projects that result in reduced risk to coastal communities and ecosystems from hazardous weather and a changing

environment. While the Community-based Restoration Program does support coastal ecosystem resilience, the primary purpose is to implement habitat restoration projects that help recover ESA-listed species and support sustainable fisheries. We anticipate publishing a Federal Funding Opportunity for the Community-based Restoration Program in early FY2019.