Guidance for FY22 NOAA Marine Debris Program Funding Opportunities

This document is applicable only to the NOAA Marine Debris Program’s FY22 grant competitions. Please note this document is only supplementary to the relevant Notice of Funding opportunity (NOFO), and the NOFO needs to be read in its entirety to ensure you do not miss any important information.

The objective of this document is to provide guidance for applicants applying to the NOAA Marine Debris Program’s (MDP) FY22 Marine Debris Removal or Marine Debris Prevention competitions. The first stage of these competitions is submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI serves as a pre-proposal, and is meant to facilitate the application process by only inviting those projects most closely aligned with competition priorities. It is important to read the full NOFO to understand all of the instructions for submitting an application, and what to expect if your LOI is invited to submit a full proposal or recommended for funding. You can find the Removal and Prevention NOFOs on grants.gov or the MDP website.

This document is designed to help you navigate through the NOFO for our competitions. Below is an outline of the type of information you will find in each section of the NOFO, to help you more easily find the relevant details you need for submission.

**Executive Summary**

- Provides the basic information about the competition including:
  - Funding Opportunity Title
  - Funding Opportunity Number
  - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number (needed for full application materials)
  - Dates for pre-proposal (Letter of Intent) and full proposal deadlines
  - Funding Opportunity Description

**Section I. Funding Opportunity Description**

A. Program Objectives

- Provides definitions of the kinds of marine debris and marine resources relevant to the funding opportunity
- Provides background on the NOAA Marine Debris Program and its primary mission and funding competition objectives

B. Program Priorities

- This is one of the most important sections of the NOFO. This section outlines the types of projects that are prioritized for funding, and what is important for applications to include (or not include) in the project design.
The evaluation criteria places strong emphasis on the relevance of the proposed project to the priorities outlined in this section. It is important to fully understand the types of projects the program is looking to fund, incorporate related requirements into the project proposal, as applicable, to create a strong application.

C. Program Authority
   ● Provides the name of the legislation that authorizes the NOAA MDP to administer the grant competition

Section II. Award Information
A. Funding Availability
   ● Provides the total expected amount of funding to be allocated for all successful awards
   ● Provides the range of federal funding that can be requested
B. Project/Award Period
   ● Provides the allowed project duration
   ● Provides earliest anticipated project start date
C. Type of Funding Instrument
   ● Describes how funding will be awarded and expectations of MDP involvement in project activities

Section III. Eligibility Information
A. Eligible Applicants
   ● Describes what types of individuals, organizations, entities, etc. may apply
B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement
   ● Explains the Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement for this competition
   ● Explains the unique circumstances an applicant may apply for a waiver for this requirement and the conditions needed to be met to do so
   ○ Every effort should be made to incorporate non-federal match in the proposal. It is an important requirement for NOAA MDP grants in that it helps leverage the federal investment in an award and encourages partnerships in accomplishing project objectives.
C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility
   ● Explains NOAA's Policy on Scientific Integrity

Section IV. Application and Submission Information
A. Address to Request Application Package
   ● Provides the website where federal forms, general instructions, and supplementary instructions can be found for this competition
   ● Provides MDP contact information if anyone experiences any difficulties accessing the application forms and/or instructions
B. Content and Form of Application
Another one of the most important sections of the NOFO. This section describes the application process, how an application should be put together, the types of documents that are required, and guidance / examples for doing so.

Applicants should plan accordingly and not wait until the last minute to submit.

- **Letter of Intent**
  - Describes the Letter of Intent (LOI) stage of this application including:
    - Submission Instructions
    - Submission Deadline
    - How to confirm if your submission was received
    - The reason this competition requires an LOI
    - Guidance for creating your LOI
      - Content to include
      - Formatting
      - Organizational Structure
    - A link to a sample LOI template

- **Full Proposal**
  (The Full Proposal may only be submitted if invited following the LOI stage. However, it is recommended to consider the level of detail needed for each component of the full proposal, when developing your proposed project plans and creating your letter of intent)
  - Explains who may submit a full proposal
  - A link to submission guidance for full proposals
  - Suggestions for uploading full proposal components
  - Application guidelines and requirements
  - Proposal components and associated page limits and descriptions

C. **Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**
- Provides instructions for registering in the System for Award Management (SAM) and obtaining/providing a valid Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number
  - Registration in SAM.gov and obtaining a DUNS number take a substantial amount of time to complete (several weeks in certain cases). Both steps are required for submitting a full proposal, so applicants should begin these processes as soon as possible; at the latest, when invited to submit a full proposal.

D. **Submission Dates and Times**
- Recommendation to begin application submission process early
● LOI and full proposal submission instructions and deadlines
● Reminder that the SAM.gov registration and a DUNS number must be completed prior to submission, and can take several weeks for processing

E. Intergovernmental Review
● Explains item 19 on Federal Form SF 424 required for full proposal which references Executive Order 12372
● Provides a link for more information on this requirement

F. Funding Restrictions
● Allowable Costs
  ○ Outlines what costs federal funding can and cannot be used for related to the project which also applies to subawards
  ○ Discusses the limited conditions and steps needed for allowing pre-award costs
● Indirect Costs
  ○ Outlines what would be considered an indirect cost
  ○ Describes what applicants need to do to be approved for including indirect costs in their project budget

G. Other Submission Requirements
● Provides details including what is needed for application submission, submission deadlines, and where to submit LOI and full proposal

V. Application Review Information
A. Evaluation Criteria

Another one of the most important sections of the NOFO. This section lays out exactly how NOAA MDP will evaluate a given proposal, and as such, can help applicants construct their proposals ensuring all required evaluation criteria are clearly accounted for and incorporated into the project design.

● Letters of Intent Evaluation Criteria
  ○ Outlines the previously described priorities for this competition
  ○ Describes LOI review scoring process
  ○ Describes the specific criteria reviewers will be using to evaluate LOIs
● Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria
  ○ Describes full proposal review scoring process
  ○ Describes the specific criteria and associated sub-criteria reviewers will be using to evaluate full proposals

B. Review and Selection Process
● Outlines the review process including initial screening, technical review, ranking, and selection process
• Outlines options for interested applicants who do not submit by the deadline as a result of being impacted by natural disasters or other unusual disruption

C. Selection Factors
• Discusses the factors that funding recommendations may be based on, separate from the rank order determined by the merit review scoring process.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates
• Outlines anticipated date for notifications of successful applications

VI. Award Administration Information
A. Award Notices
• Outlines successful applicants may be asked to modify certain components of their application prior to final approval of an award
• Shares how successful applicants will be notified and guidelines for sharing their award status

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements
• Outlines specific conditions, requirements, and guidance that will need to be followed, including environmental compliance, which should be considered and appropriate details included in application materials as appropriate

C. Reporting
• Describes reporting requirements and expectations

VII. Agency Contacts
• Provides MDP contact information for any competition questions