Writing Successful NOAA Grant Applications

Carrie McDougall, Ph.D.

Senior Program Manager

NOAA Office of Education

Colleen Coogan

B-WET New England Regional Program Manager

Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

NMEA Conference, Newport, RI

June 29, 2015

A disclaimer…

This presentation is NOT:

- A guarantee of approval of any application
- A guarantee that your application will receive a high score
- An endorsement of any type of program by NOAA
- The sole source of information about federal funding opportunities administered by NOAA
- The sole source of technical assistance regarding the competitive application process

Background on ELG and B-WET

Environmental Literacy Grants (ELG)

- GOAL: to increase understanding and use of environmental information to promote stewardship and informed decision making by a diverse pool of educators, students and the public
- A competitive grants program for K-12 and informal science education
- Funded projects utilize NOAA assets and typically partner with a part of NOAA
- Began in 2005
- 88 funded projects = $42M
- Annual average: 8.8 awards, $4.2M total
- Average of 90* applications and ~$42M requested per RFA
- Typical funding rate: 9%

* Full apps only

http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grantprog.html

Enviro. Lit. Grants

- 1-5 year awards
- $100,000-$1.5M awards
  (current award levels at $250K-$500K)
- Federal entities, foreign organizations, and for-profits ineligible
- Types of projects funded:
  - Civic Engagement
  - Data Visualization & Interpretation
  - Service Learning
  - Teacher PD (in-service & pre-service)
  - Citizen Science
  - Science On a Sphere & Other spheres
  - Museum Exhibits
  - Curriculum Development
- Audiences: Public, informal and K-12 educators, K-12 students

Science On a Sphere viewers at Discovery Science Center, **ELG**

http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/elg_projects.html

Enviro. Lit. Grants: 2015 Competition

Projects will…

- strengthen the public's and/or K-12 students' environmental literacy to enable informed decision-making necessary for **community resilience** to extreme weather events and environmental changes
- focus on geographic awareness and an understanding of Earth systems related to the threats and vulnerabilities associated with a community's location
- be based on the latest science about the threats and vulnerabilities facing communities and consider socio-economic and ecological factors
- actively engage participants in learning about and addressing real-world issues
- utilize NOAA's vast scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics

The target audiences are:

- the public, K-12 students, informal educators and formal educators

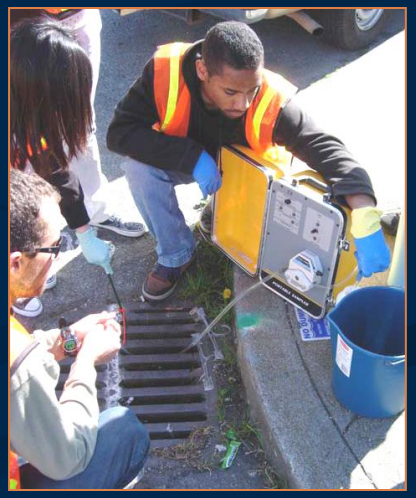
www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html

Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program

- Goal: Use outdoor, place-based, hands-on learning experiences to increase understanding and stewardship of our marine and coastal resources, integrate classroom instructional requirements with meaningful outdoor experiential learning
- Seven regions: California, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Hawai'i, New England, Pacific Northwest
- All programs focus on Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs)

Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences

- B-WET supported **MWEEs for ~69,000 students** with 2014 grant funding:
  - Preparation, action & reflection
  - Aligned with standards
  - Utilizing NOAA sciences/assets
  - Hands on, investigative, project-oriented
- B-WET supported **MWEE professional development for ~2,600 teachers** with 2014 grant funding:
  - Aim for minimum 3-day professional development including outdoors
  - Adequate reflection/follow up/support
  - Incentives (stipends, continuing credits)
- Since 2002 NOAA has awarded over $63 million to support more than 600 projects.



B-WET Competitive Awards

- Priority areas are defined annually in FFO (vary by region):
  - Student MWEEs
  - Teacher Professional Development
  - Local priorities as defined by regions
- Funding:
  - 1 to 3 years
  - $10K - ~$200K annually
- Eligible organizations:
  - K-12 schools & school divisions, colleges, state & local agencies, tribal governments, and non-profits

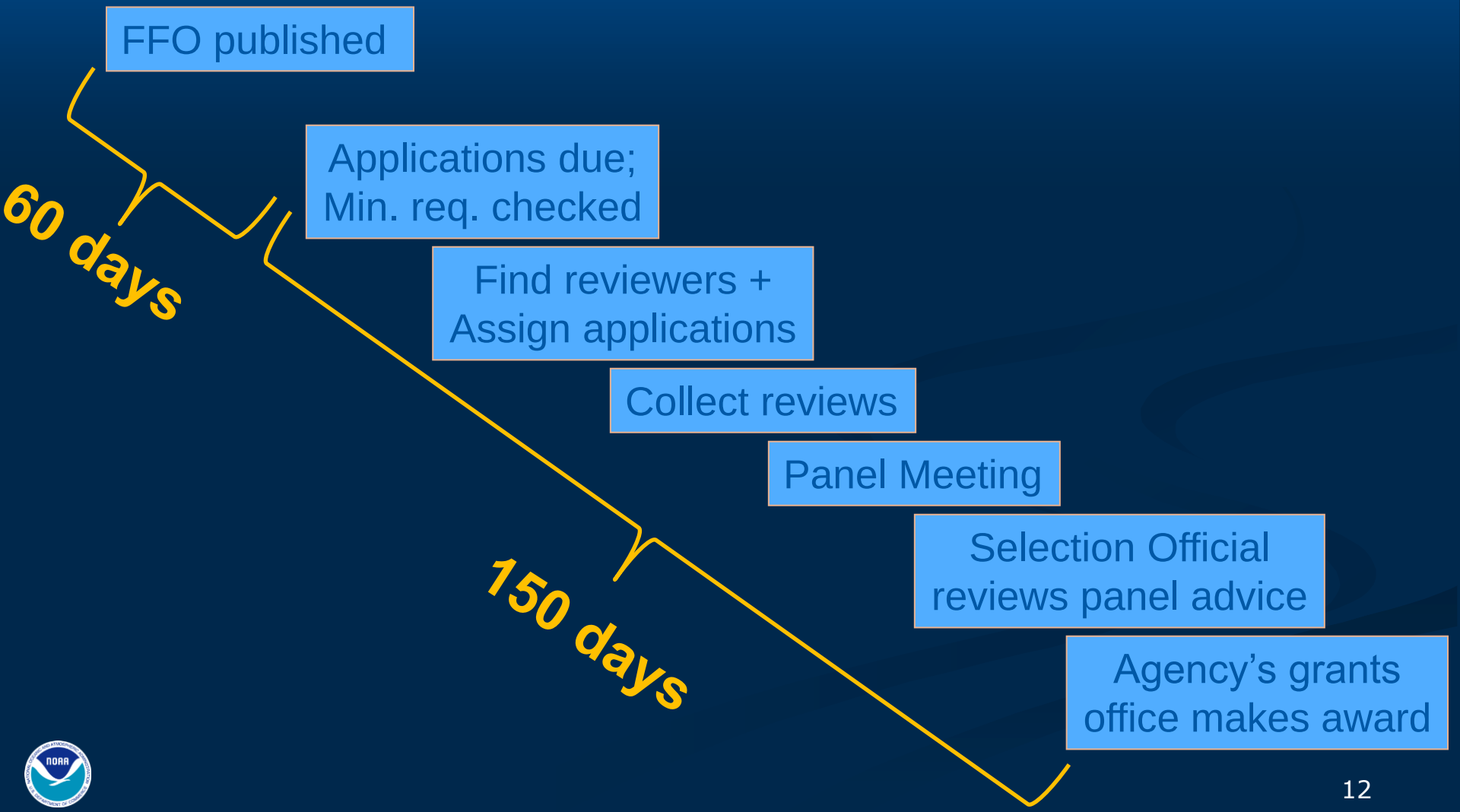
http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet.html

Future Challenges for NOAA's Education Programs

- Federal STEM Education Consolidation
  - Neither B-WET nor ELG in President's Budget Request
- FY16 Appropriations Uncertainty
  - ELG/Competitive Education Grants not mentioned in the FY16 House Mark
  - B-WET flat funded at $7.2M
  - Possible continuing resolution to fund govt
- General: Uncertain support for environmental education or informal science education

Preparing to Apply

Review & Selection Process Overview



Finding Federal Grants: Grants.gov

Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) Announcement

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Office of the Under Secretary (USEC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Strengthening the Public's and/or K-12 Students' Environmental Literacy for Community Resilience to Extreme Weather Events and Environmental Changes

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-SEC-OED-2015-2004408

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.008, NOAA Mission-Related Education Awards

Dates:

The deadline for full applications is 11:59:59 pm EDT on April 13, 2015 (Note that NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM EDT). Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted. Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system and with SAM.gov prior to submitting an application. These registration processes can take several weeks and involve multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Applications submitted through Grants.gov are automatically date/time stamped when they are validated and submitted to the Agency. PLEASE NOTE: When submitting

First Steps

- Get registered with Grants.gov and SAM.gov
- **READ (carefully) the funding announcement (FFO)**
- Participate in informational teleconference (if available)
- Review additional information provided on associated websites (FAQ, templates, etc.)
- Pay attention to evaluation criteria to make sure your project is appropriate
- Be prepared to tailor your application to the specific funding opportunity (don't submit a application written for another agency announcement without major revision)

The following slides contain *general guidelines* and tips for preparing an application, but always refer to a specific FFO for details on format and content of a specific opportunity. Requirements can vary a great deal between competitions in different years and even between regions (for B-WET) in a single year.

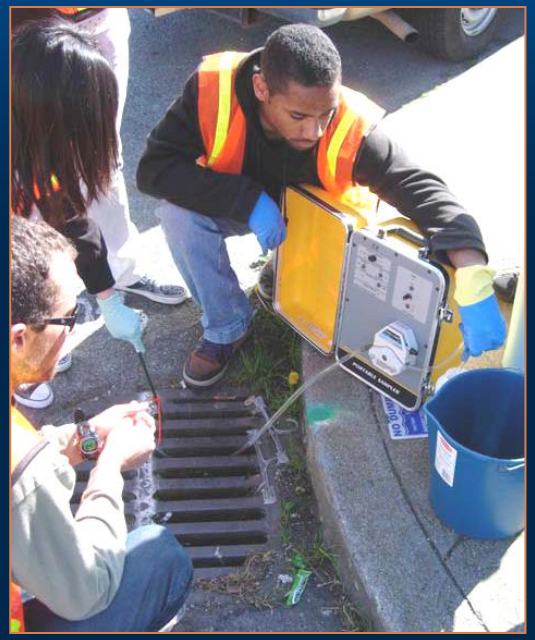
Are you ready to apply for a grant?

- Need – What is the need for your project?
- Target Audience – Who will you be working with and how will you engage them?
- Impact and Evaluation– What is the anticipated impact of your project and how will you measure it?
- Timeline – Are you sure what you plan can be accomplished in the given timeframe?
- Sustainability – Can the project be sustained beyond the period of the grant and does it have a lasting impact?
- Workload – Have you considered the workload impacts of applying and the follow-on grant management?

Key Aspects of an Application

- The following slides review some of the main elements of an application
- ALWAYS refer to FFO for specific requirements and format

Project Description



Reaching Out to Communities and Kids with Science in San Francisco, San Francisco State University, **California B-WET**

Describe in detail what your project will achieve:

- What: goals and objectives
- Why: need for your project
- Who: target audience, location
- How: plan of action, and lasting impacts

Compare to FFO reviewer evaluation criteria and make sure it fits

Qualifications of the Applicant

CoCoRaHS: Family citizen science program, PI: CO State Climatologist, **ELG**

- Describe ability of organization to successfully implement and manage proposed project
  - Highlight organization's expertise, past experience, and qualifications of key staff
  - Resumes/CVs are required

Budget

- Make sure to show the basis for your costs: provide clearly delineated description of costs
- Make sure it adds up & is not over the max or below the minimum
- Look at where your money is allocated and what this says about the project
- There are budget templates or models available
- Include documentation of indirect cost rate agreement

Project Evaluation

- Explain your plans for meeting the goals and objectives of your project and for tracking and measuring progress on your outputs and your short-term outcomes
- Use specific and appropriate approaches to project evaluation
  - Plans may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include, for example, evaluation tools, observation, or outside consultation
- Include appropriate funds for evaluation in the budget
- Identify your evaluator and include them in the writing team
- Reviewers will not be impressed by broad outcomes that evaluation is not assessing

Outreach and Dissemination

- Projects should include significant external sharing and communication
- How are experiences or results/lessons learned shared with peers and others in the community?

An elementary student interviews a Hawaiian elder "kupuna," about traditional marine resource management. *Kupuna Wisdom Project*, Community Conservation Network, **Hawaii B-WET**

Partnerships

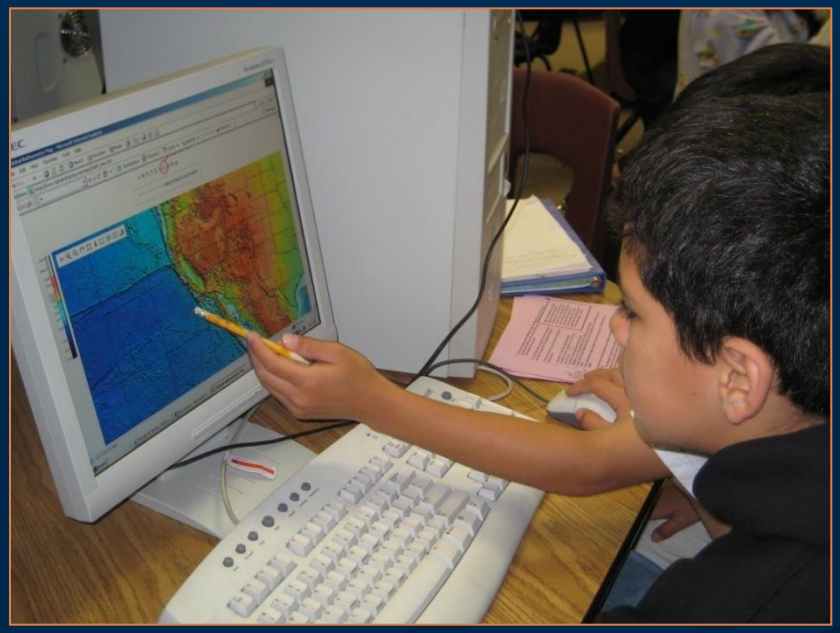
- Partnerships among multiple organizations or networks of organizations are typically a component of full-scale implementation
- Include commitment letters from partners detailing their role in and/or funding of project
- Do NOT include letters of general endorsement

Marine Mammal Institute: North Carolina informal science educators learning about marine mammals and climate change, **ELG**

Incorporate NOAA Assets

Applicants must utilize NOAA assets in delivery of program

- NOAA staff
- NOAA facilities & protected natural areas
- NOAA data
- NOAA education resources:
  - Online Tutorials
  - In-depth Curriculum
  - Individual Lesson Plans



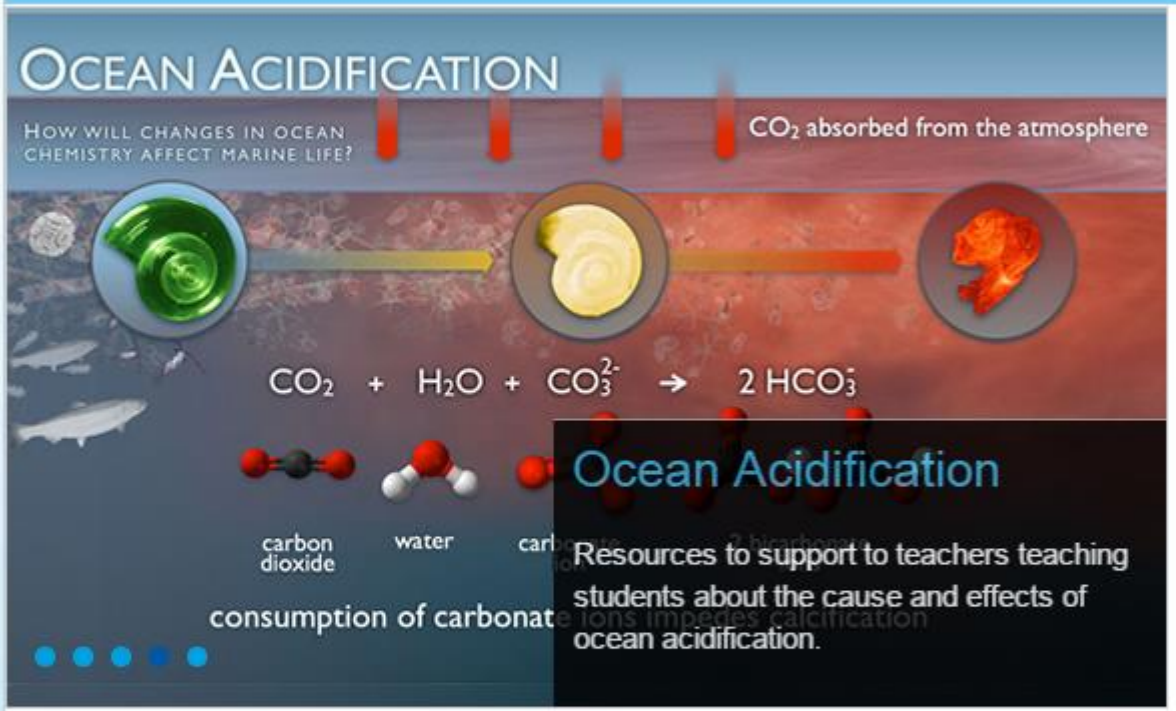
ACES: K-12 students learning about marine animal migration and NOAA data, **ELG**

NOAA EDUCATION RESOURCES

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

» Home » Education Programs » About this Site » Contact Us » Feedback » SEARCH

Ocean and Coasts | Climate | Weather and Atmosphere | Marine Life | Freshwater | Special Topics | Education Events



FY14 Education Accomplishments Report

The Accomplishments Report highlights education achievements throughout NOAA in 2014.

Marine Endangered Species Art Contest

Calendar Sep 2015 - Dec 2016 by the Atlantic Regional NOAA Fisheries Office.

The Clouds Outside My Window!

A picture book on clouds by a National Weather Service meteorologist with a template to make your own!

Education & Outreach Facebook Page

Postings from the NOAA Education Resources website and other timely outreach information.

Education Opportunities

- Educator Opportunities
- Student Opportunities
- Funding Opportunities
- Outreach Events/Conferences

Featured Education Resource

June is World Ocean Month

Our Ocean and Coasts education resources collections are highlighted. While there is only one global ocean, the vast body of water that covers 71 percent of Earth... Read More

Ocean

Follow Us

RSS, Email List, or Facebook.

NOAA News

- NOAA, partners predict an average 'dead zone' for Gulf of Mexico
- Cordell Bank, Farallones

www.education.noaa.gov

NOAA EDUCATION RESOURCES
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

» Home » Education Programs » About this Site » Contact Us » Feedback » SEARCH

Ocean and Coasts | Climate | Weather and Atmosphere | Marine Life | Freshwater | Special Topics | Education Events

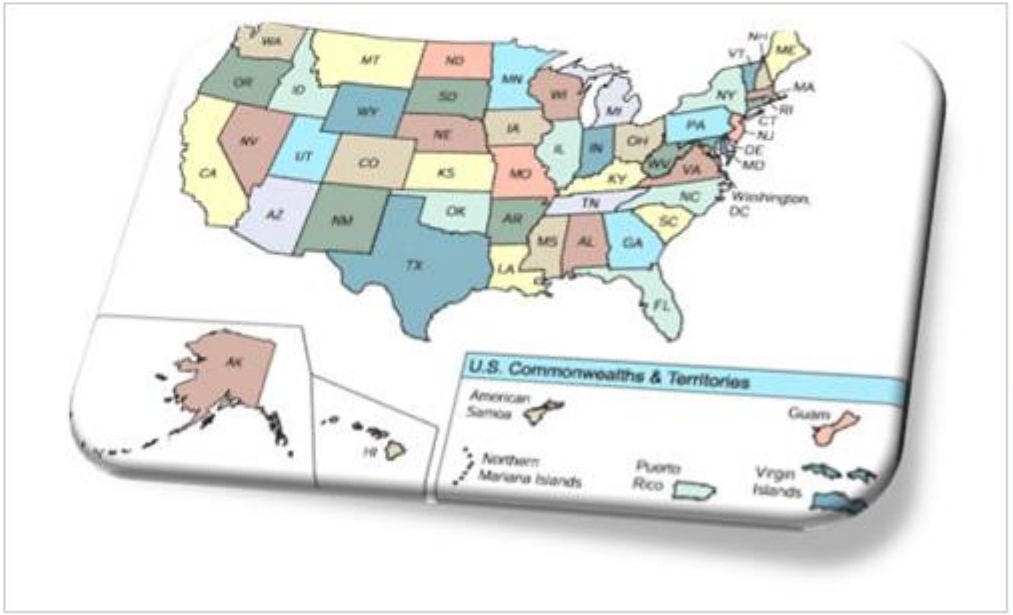
Home >> Special Topics >> NOAA in Your Backyard

SHARE

NOAA in Your Backyard

NOAA has hundreds of facilities and professional communicators across the nation. Get connected to NOAA guest speakers, field trips, and professional development in your area. Below are links to NOAA resources in various regions of the country that would be of interest to educators:

- The Gulf of Mexico Region
- The Mid-Atlantic Region
- The Northeast Regions
- The Northwest Region
- The Alaska Region
- The Great Lakes Region
- The Southeast Region
- The Southwest Region
- The Mountain West Region



If your region is not listed above try one of the following for general NOAA regional contacts:

NOAA In Your State
NOAA Regional Collaboration

http://www.education.noaa.gov/Special_Topics/NOAA_in_Your_Backyard.html

NOAA OFFICE OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Home | Grants | Scholarships | Leadership | Outreach | >> SEARCH

Home > Grants > NOAA Assets

QUICK LINKS

- Student Opportunities
- Outreach Events
- OED Staff

EDUCATION RESOURCES

CLICK HERE TO VISIT

NOAA EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (PDF)

NOAA Assets

This list is a sampling of some outstanding resources that are easily accessible via the web. This list is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all of NOAA's assets.

NOAA has a huge number of assets in ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather and climate sciences that include protected natural areas such as marine sanctuaries and estuarine research reserves, a large fleet of ocean-going ships, buoys, weather stations, and other monitoring devices, scientists, and a rich array of web sites in which data, data products and information about the research and monitoring can be found. Additionally, we have provided a summary of NOAA programs and activities sorted by the state or territory in which they are based or focused.

Categories of NOAA Assets

Education Resources and Programs
Data Visualizations and Satellite Imagery
Real-time Data and Data Archives
Climate and Other Atmospheric-Related Information
Fisheries, Ocean and Coastal-Related Information
Weather-Related Information
Photos, Videos, and Other Multi-media

Education Resources and Programs (examples)

All NOAA: http://www.education.noaa.gov/

http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html

"Ocean Today" Video Assets

- Ocean Today program is a free educational resource consisting of permanent touch-screen kiosk installations, a portable touch-screen version, and a website
- Content geared toward a general family audience at a 6th grade reading level and aligns with the Essential Principles of Ocean Sciences
- 12-14 new videos added every year with over 200 available at: oceantoday.noaa.gov (113 in Spanish)
- Each video is short (<3 minutes) with one key take-away message
- Kiosk are currently in 35 locations in 4 countries – in aquariums, science centers, museums and visitors centers

Questions?

Carrie McDougall, Ph.D.

Senior Program Manager

NOAA Office of Education

carrie.mcdougall@noaa.gov

Colleen Coogan

B-WET New England Regional Program Manager

NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

Colleen.Coogan@noaa.gov

Additional Resources:

- This presentation and Dos and Don'ts handout are available online: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html#page=resources

Additional Resources and Backup Slides

General Tips and Guidance

Respond to Announcement and Follow Directions

- Know the Granting Organization
  - Philosophy & Priorities
- Know the Process
  - Grant Criteria & Guidelines
  - Deadlines
- Know Your Project
  - Detailed Project Summary, including deliverables
  - Detailed Budget
- Make a compelling argument
  - Provide sufficient detail, **follow reviewer evaluation criteria**
- Don’t assume the reviewer knows your project/organization
- Call the federal program officer AFTER YOU HAVE READ THE FFO if you continue to have questions

Carefully Format & Organize the Text

- Follow the suggested project format
- Make succinct statements on project goals & deliverables. Provide necessary detail to back up the summary
- Use bullets, headers, text boxes, etc. to organize and emphasize key points
- Proofread to reduce redundancy and grammatical errors
- See handout for a summary of "Dos and Don'ts"

Preparing a B-WET Grant Application

There are resources at the site below help you prepare to submit an application for B-WET grant funding.

http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet.html#page=resources

Please note that some regions offer grant-writing workshops for prospective applicants. Please see regional websites or contact the program manager for your region for more information.

ELG Minimum Requirements*

- Application was received on time
- Applicant is eligible
- Budget request & project duration are within the min and max limits
- Forms: SF-424, SF-424a, SF-424b
- Title Page/Executive Summary
- Project Description does not exceed page limits
- Format OK, e.g., letter-sized paper, font size
- Milestones/Timeline
- Resume & Current & Pending support for PI
- Budget Narrative (Justification) & Table

* always refer to FFO for details

Budget: Cost Categories

Budgets should be thought about in cost categories

- Cost categories help think through actual costs
  - If you cannot break request down into this level of detail, you probably need to think more about the project!
- Common Cost Categories include:
  - Personnel: Salary for staff **directly** involved in project. Provide # of hours or % of time.
  - Fringe benefits: Benefits for staff requested in Personnel category. Usually % of personnel.
  - Travel: Mileage, busses, overnight accommodations, etc.
  - Equipment: Big equipment - generally any item priced over $5000 per unit (not cumulative)
  - Supplies: All other "equipment" and supplies
  - Contractual: Any contracted services (Example: outside evaluator)
  - Indirect charges: "The cost of doing business" – phones, facilities, internet, etc.

Milestones/Timeline

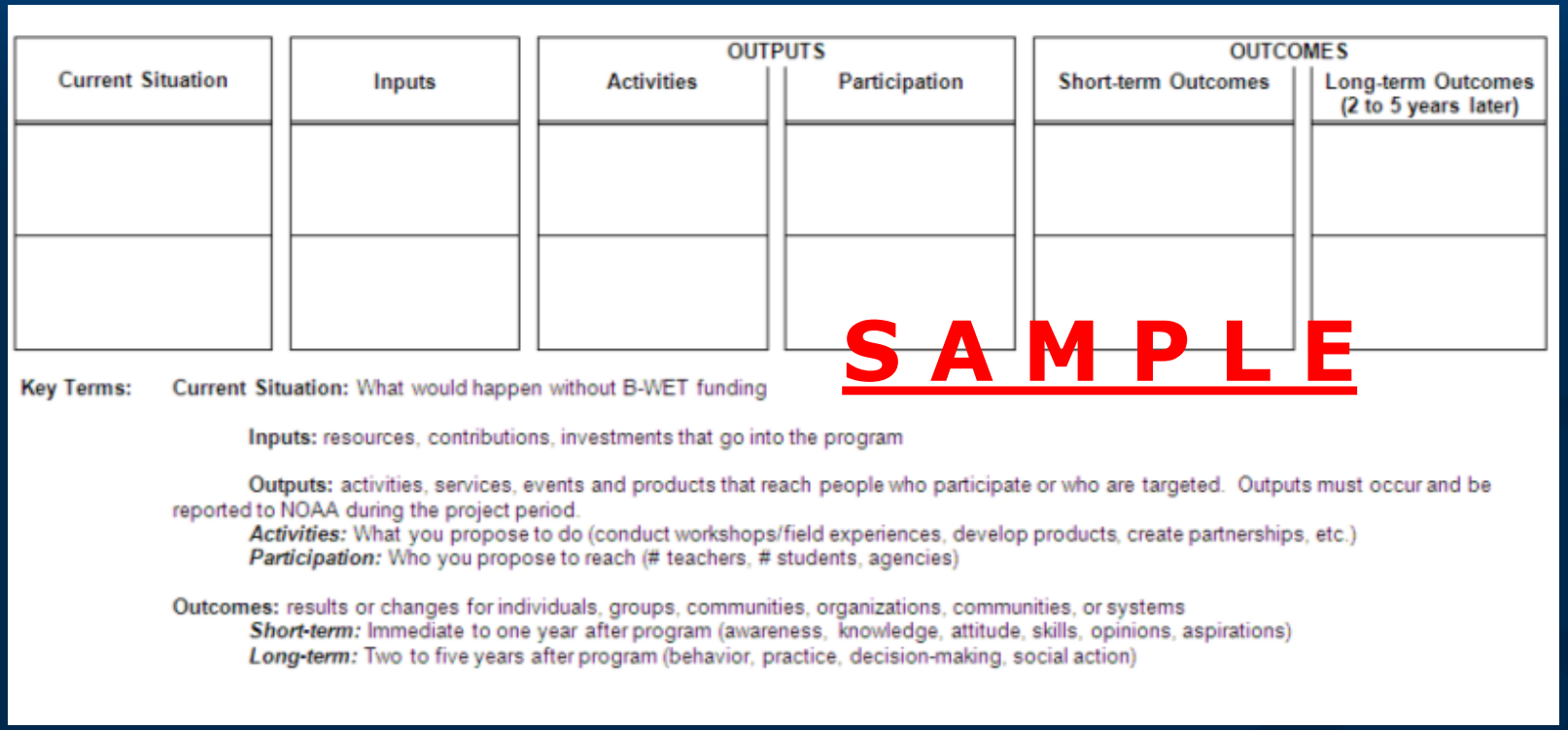
- Include a project schedule that indicates when each action, event, milestone, product development, and evaluation will occur.

OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE
Objective 1	By August 15, 2010, meet with at least three LEA supervisors to complete needs assessment & project planning.	Individual meetings	Meet with nine Eastern Shore Environmental Science Coordinators for strategic planning needs assessment for each LEA, PD and potential partnerships	July- August, 2010
Objective 2	By fall, 2010, train 30 teachers from 9 LEAS. By fall, 2011, train 30 additional teachers from 9 LEAS. By fall, 2012 train 30 additional teachers from 9 LEAS	Summer workshops MAEOE Conference Attendance In-service Day Workshops as determined by LEA	Environmental Science Content Issues-based Instruction GIS	July -August, 2010 – 12 June, 2013

S A M P L E

Logic Models

- A helpful tool that can be used in project planning, implementation, and assessment



Current Situation	Inputs	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES	
		Activities	Participation	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes (2 to 5 years later)

S A M P L E

Key Terms: **Current Situation:** What would happen without B-WET funding

Inputs: resources, contributions, investments that go into the program

Outputs: activities, services, events and products that reach people who participate or who are targeted. Outputs must occur and be reported to NOAA during the project period.
Activities: What you propose to do (conduct workshops/field experiences, develop products, create partnerships, etc.)
Participation: Who you propose to reach (# teachers, # students, agencies)

Outcomes: results or changes for individuals, groups, communities, organizations, communities, or systems
Short-term: Immediate to one year after program (awareness, knowledge, attitude, skills, opinions, aspirations)
Long-term: Two to five years after program (behavior, practice, decision-making, social action)

More information available at:

http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/evaluation

http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/evaluation.html