

Frequently Asked Questions about the 2016 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program

QUESTION: Who is eligible to apply for funding?

ANSWER: Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applications from individuals, federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Individuals and federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply.

QUESTION: Will match be required for this program?

ANSWER: Yes, cost-sharing through cash or in-kind match will be required at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. Recipients provide one-third of the total project cost. Each proposal may request \$100,000 - \$2 million in federal funds.

QUESTION: When will proposals be due?

ANSWER: Proposals will be due August 16, 2016, either via Grants.gov or mail with postmark by deadline.

QUESTION: When are the state governor's support letters due?

ANSWER: There is no set deadline date for the state governor support letter; however, NOAA will only award funds to projects that receive and demonstrate approval of the state governor to implement the proposed project. If a letter from the governor cannot be obtained, a letter provided by a governor's appointee, with a carbon copy (cc) to the governor, will be sufficient. Before awards are made, NOAA will verify that correspondence from the state governor has been received.

QUESTION: How is this program different than the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program?

ANSWER: Both the Community-based Restoration and Coastal Ecosystem Resilience grant programs fund projects that will aid in recovering listed species and rebuilding sustainable fish populations. However, the primary objective of the Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency grant program is to implement projects that increase ecosystem resilience to extreme weather and changing climates that result in reduced risk to coastal communities. The amount of funding available for projects will range from \$100,000 - \$2 million per project, whereas the Community-based Restoration Program has recurring funding opportunities, with multi-year awards up to \$5 million. While the Community-based Restoration Program does support coastal community resilience, the primary objective of these grants is to recover listed species and support sustainable fisheries.

QUESTION: How is this program different from the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants administered by the NOAA's National Ocean Service?

ANSWER: NOAA has developed the Regional Coastal Resilience and Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency grant programs as complementary programs to build resilience of coastal communities and ecosystems in the U.S. The primary focus of the Coastal Ecosystem program is the development of healthy and sustainable coastal ecosystems through habitat restoration and conservation. The primary focus of the Regional Coastal Resilience program is the development of safe and productive coastal communities through the development of policies, incentives, regulations, standards, and other tools and strategies.

For example, the use of nature-based infrastructure (e.g., wetlands, oyster bars) is emerging as an effective strategy to build coastal resilience to rising sea level and storm surge and provide benefits to coastal communities (storm protection) and coastal ecosystems (habitat). In the context of these complementary programs, the Coastal Ecosystem program would be an appropriate source of funding for the construction or restoration of nature-based infrastructure while the Regional Coastal Resilience program would be an appropriate source of funding to support the implementation of policies and tools (incentives, regulations, standards, etc.) enabling the use of nature-based infrastructure. NOAA's National Ocean Service will not issue a Federal Funding Opportunity to solicit for Regional Coastal Resilience Grants in 2016. More information on the Regional Coastal Resiliency Grants can be found at <https://coast.noaa.gov/resilience-grant/>

QUESTION: How is "resilience" defined in the context of this competition?

ANSWER: Resilience is the ability of an ecosystem to absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events such as extreme weather or long-term changing environmental conditions such as sea level rise. Projects should enhance the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems—thereby increasing community resilience—and reducing risk while also providing habitat to threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act, fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or other marine and coastal species with a connection to NOAA Fisheries management.

QUESTION: What are some examples of projects in the context of this program?

ANSWER: Proposed restoration projects that directly result in resilient ecosystems with the greatest capacity to provide habitat and reduce the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather and changing environmental conditions will be most successful under this solicitation.

Successful applications will 1) identify the issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on the ecosystem, target species (e.g. listed or managed species), and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.

Specific examples: Projects that restore tidal marshes, floodplains, free-flowing riverine systems, coral reefs, and living shorelines can provide naturally resilient features such as flood reduction and protection while also providing critical habitat for fish to reproduce and develop.

QUESTION: Can this FFO be used to support fishing communities and for rebuilding fisheries?

ANSWER: Yes, because proposals that will create or improve habitats important for rebuilding fish stocks would improve the resilience of fishing community economies. Projects that improve coastal ecosystem resilience to a changing climate will help ensure availability of habitats essential for fisheries productivity.

QUESTION: How many project applications were received through the 2015 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants FFO?

ANSWER: In response to the 2015 FFO, NOAA Fisheries received 59 proposals requesting approximately \$46 million.

QUESTION: How many projects were funded through this program in 2015?

ANSWER: NOAA awarded a total of \$4 million to six habitat restoration projects under the 2015 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program. More information on the selected projects can be found here: <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/coastalresiliency.html>

QUESTION: Are there any substantive differences between the 2015 and 2016 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants FFOs?

ANSWER: Yes. In the 2015 FFO, we provided priority to projects that could be implemented within 12 months of the award start date. In the 2016 FFO, we have expanded that to 24 months. We are seeking projects that can initiate on-the-ground implementation within 24 months of the award start date.