

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Financial Assistance  
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**



NOFO Title	<u>Military Families Outdoors Program</u>
NOFO Number:	<u>P24AS00337</u>
Announcement Type:	<u>Initial</u>
CFDA Number:	<u>15.954- National Park Service Conservation, Protection, Outreach, and Education.</u>

Issue Date: April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024  
Application Due Date: July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Time: 11:59 PM, ET

*Note: Per 2 CFR 1402.204 (f) Bureaus and offices must consider the timeliness of the application submission. Applications that are submitted beyond the announced deadline date must be removed from the review process.*

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### **Section A: Program Description**

**Legislative Authority:** 54 U.S.C. § 101702(a) Cooperative Agreements, Transfer of Service Appropriated Funds and 54 U.S.C. §200103(g)(1) Outdoor Recreation of Programs, Research and Education.

**Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number:** 15.954- National Park Service Conservation, Protection, Outreach, and Education.

**Federal Regulations:** 2 C.F.R. § 200, 2 C.F.R. § 1402

**Program Background, Objectives, and Goals:**

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The National Park Service (NPS), the Department of Defense, Defense Health Agency (DoD) have a partnership focused on promoting the health and wellness of active-duty military service members and their families through positive engagement experiences with national parks, public lands, and waterways. These experiences will promote healthy lifestyle habits and inspire families to become environmental stewards of national parks.

Nature-based health promotion programs may include a focus on education, recreation, outdoor skills-building, or outdoor conservation projects. The total menu of program opportunities offered should work together to build confidence in participants to engage with national parks throughout their lifetimes.

Types of programming offered should fit into four main stages:

- Invitation – participants learn about opportunities through strategic communications.
- Introduction – participants experience a “short dose” of nature through opportunities such as drop-in events or day trips to nearby national parks.
- Engagement – participants experience a “deep dose” of nature through opportunities such as multi-day and overnight national park trips.
- Empowerment – participants embrace the health benefits of nature and feel confident incorporating outdoor experiences into their lifestyle independently through self-guided trips, volunteerism, employment, or other means.

Program offerings as well as communications during and after each event should equip participants to move forward through this continuum of engagement. Ultimately, the goal of all programming should be to empower and equip participants to embrace nature experiences as an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

The need for this effort stems from the significant public health challenges faced by active-duty military service members and their families and the health promoting benefits of outdoor engagement and experiences in national parks, public lands and waterways. The DOD is facing several high priority public health issues impacting the physical, mental, spiritual, and social wellbeing of active-duty military service members and their families.

This effort serves to advance shared goals to support DOD 's Total Force Fitness, NPS Healthy Parks Healthy People, and the NPS Military and Veterans Engagement Strategy.

- [Healthy Parks Healthy People - Health & Safety \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)
- [Total Force Fitness | Health.mil](#)
- [Military and Veteran Engagement Strategy - American Military \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)
- [American Military \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

The NPS may choose to fund multiple awards in order to meet the goals and objectives of this effort.

Major objectives of this program include:

- Address high priority public health issues impacting the physical, mental, spiritual, and social wellbeing of active-duty military service members and their families using an evidence-based approach.
- Provide a continuum of park- and nature-based health promoting activities to improve the health and wellbeing of active-duty military servicemembers and their families that will:
  - Increase awareness of and access to park and nature-based health resources and opportunities.
  - Increase access to health benefits of parks and public lands among underserved active-duty military communities through communications, community engagement, and partnerships.
  - Empower active-duty military families to independently take advantage of the health benefits of National Parks and nature experiences.
- Enhance knowledge and build the capacity of the National Park Service, DOD Defense Health Agency, and partner organizations to improve overall health outcomes for active-duty servicemembers and their families
- Design and implement an evaluation plan, to monitor the effectiveness of different types of programming, recruitment, and health outcomes in participants.
- Prepare a final report with lessons learned and recommendations to support a national sustainable program.

Deliverables:

These are the minimum requirements. All deliverables should be developed in coordination with NPS and DoD. Applicants may include additional deliverables in their project design.

- **Operations Plan** that articulates all planned events including participant recruitment methods, locations, descriptions, and how program offerings fit into a continuum of nature-based experiences.
- **Communications Plan** should include print, web, and social media content that will ensure all messaging is unified to support brand identity and an emphasis on health. Communications content should be designed to build active-duty military families'

awareness of program opportunities as well as community support for a healthy outdoor lifestyle.

- **Evaluations plan** that will assess data to determine if the programs are meeting the stated goals and objectives. The evaluation should examine the outcomes associated with outdoor experiences and impact on families' overall health and sense of community belonging.
- **Outdoor engagement programs** delivery
- **Military Wellness Center Engagement Plan** that specifies concrete ways health coaches and physicians at military wellness centers can encourage nature-based experiences to improve health and wellbeing of active-duty military servicemembers and families e.g. park prescriptions and program referrals. This may include supporting a randomized controlled trial.
- **Reporting** including quarterly and final reports.

#### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The NPS is firmly committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment in its parks. Successful applicants will have well-articulated strategies for prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into their proposed programming. Their organizations should also reflect their commitment to DEIA.

#### Organizational Capacity Standards

Partner organizations must have:

- Proven operational systems and infrastructure and/or the ability to increase operational capacity if infrastructure does not presently exist in the organization.
- Data information systems that protect personal identification information
- Dedicated staff to support program development and implementation.

#### Financial Management

- All partner organizations must be in full compliance with all the relevant statutes and policies of the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) as they pertain to this financial assistance announcement.
- Applicants should provide estimates of dollar per person impact to forecast how many individuals or families will be engaged based on funding received.

Risk Management: Each organization must have adequate insurance and liability coverage.

#### Program Quality Assurance

The organization must:

- Be able to clearly articulate how they have developed and implemented successful nature-based programming for diverse audiences in the past three years,
- Clearly identify the mission, core values, and/or guiding principles of their organization
- Have leadership and supervisory staff biographies.

Brand Identity: Brand identity guidelines will be provided to each organization regarding the placement and use of the NPS logo and mark, as well as those of each individual organization on

uniforms, publications, websites, and web applications involving programs and projects funded under this program agreement.

## **Section B: Federal Award Information**

### **Estimated Total Funding:** \$100,000 to \$5 million

The NPS may provide up to \$5 million per fiscal year for this opportunity (based on availability of funding, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations). The amount of funding available per award for this NOFO will be determined once final fiscal year (FY) 2024 fund obligations have been made to advance partnership goals, objectives and priorities of the NPS and the Department of Defense, Defense Health Agency.

### **Expected Award Amount:**

An estimated range of \$100,000 to \$5 million of funding is anticipated for each award. The amount of funding available per award for this NOFO will be determined as part of the application review process based on applications received and funding made available through appropriations. This solicitation, and awards under this solicitation, are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by the agency or by law.

### **Anticipated Award Date: September 30, 2024**

Projects receiving funding through this NOFO will start once funding has been secured and awards have been made.

**Anticipated Term of the Agreement:** September 30, 2024– December 31, 2029. Agreement terms for funded projects can range between one and five years, depending on the negotiated project statement of work. Agreements are not effective until fully executed with signature from the NPS Financial Assistance Awarding Officer.

### **Estimated Number of Agreements to be Awarded:** Multiple

Each activity or project under this agreement will be treated individually, with more detail through project statements, project plans and budgets developed cooperatively between the NPS and the non-Federal entity.

### **Funding Instrument Type:**

**Master Cooperative Agreement** – A master cooperative agreement is an agreement with a non-Federal entity in which more than one project is anticipated. This type of cooperative agreement includes a detailed description of all types of work that can be done under the agreement. The master cooperative agreement will also establish the overarching terms and conditions agreed to by the National Park Service and the non-Federal entity and are not funded. Specific projects and funding under a master agreement are identified through task agreements, which are issued under the applicable legal authority documented in the master cooperative agreement. A specific task

agreement will always reference, and be subject to, the terms and conditions of the master cooperative agreement.

**Substantial Involvement for Cooperative Agreement:**

Substantial involvement may include:

- NPS is involved with the non-Federal entity in describing the goals, jointly developing the scope, and the activities to be accomplished. This must be combined with other substantial involvement, such as providing technical assistance or any of the statements listed below, that goes beyond Federal stewardship responsibilities.
- NPS staff will assist the non-Federal entity in selecting projects, providing orientation to park resources, overseeing assignments, teaching new skills, distributing tools and equipment and providing technical assistance and safety training.
- NPS will provide the services of a Program Coordinator to serve as liaison to (the non-Federal entity) for the work under this agreement. This includes consulting and working specifically with the non-Federal entity’s program coordinator.

**Other Information:** Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards.

**Section C: Eligibility Information**

**1. Eligible Applicants**

State, local, and tribal governments, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations.

**2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Non-Federal cost sharing or matching is not required to be eligible for an award under this NOFO.

**Excluded Parties:**

NPS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The NPS cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

**Foreign Entities or Projects:**

This program does not provide funding to foreign entities or for projects conducted outside the United States.

## **Section D: Application and Submission Information**

### **1. Address to Request Application Package**

A complete application package is described in this Section. The application package contains both mandatory standard forms (SF) and various optional templates that may be used to satisfy other stated application requirements. The application package can also be accessed and downloaded from the Related Documents tab on the Synopsis page of this announcement in Grants.gov. [Applicants may also request paper copies of application materials by contacting the Awarding Agency using the information provided in Section G of this NOFO.]

### **2. Contents and Form of Application Submission**

You must complete the mandatory standard forms and any applicable optional forms, in accordance with the instructions below, as required by this NOFO. Do not include any proprietary or personally identifiable information. A complete application should include:

Mandatory Requirements:

- Standard Form 424 (SF 424) - Application for Federal Assistance. Complete this form as much as possible with all applicable information.
- Standard Form 424A or C (SF 424A/C) - Budget Information. Applicants must provide an estimated cumulative budget for the total project in the proposal. The estimated budget must align with the projected scope of work presented in the application.
- Project Abstract Summary – The project abstract form must be completed to meet Federal award reporting requirements. Ensure the project abstract succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. If the application is funded, this information will be made available for public access including on USAspending.gov.
- Detailed Budget – The project budget shall include detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget, including the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project when cost share is identified to be included (reference section C of this announcement). Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the SF424A and SF424C.
- Standard Form 424B or D (SF 424B/D) – Assurances  
This form must be signed and submitted with your application.
- Project Narrative - Proposal Submission Format  
The proposal is a narrative description that should specifically address each of the review criteria (see Section E). The proposal text must be no longer than 10 pages, no smaller than font size 12, and have 1-inch margins. The 10-page limit includes all text, figures, references, and resumes. (Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the statement



of indirect charges are not counted as part of the page limit). Additionally, only information that is pertinent to the proposal should be included.

- **Indirect Costs**

If your proposed budget includes indirect costs, the rate as proposed must meet the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, Section 200.414 and 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix III through Appendix VII, as applicable. If fully negotiated indirect cost rates are applied, the associated rate agreement must be provided with your proposal. Proposals that fail to document their indirect costs may have those costs disallowed.

Optional Requirements:

- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.112, applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

*Applicability.*

- This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.
- In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by sub recipients, the conflict of interest provisions in 2 CFR §200.318 apply.

*Notification.*

- Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR §200.112.
- Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by sub recipients.

*Restrictions on lobbying.* Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 43 CFR §18 and 31 USC §1352.

*Review procedures.* The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict-of-interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

*Enforcement.* Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR §200.339, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR §180).

- **Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, institutions of higher

education, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System](#), in accordance with 2 CFR 200 subpart F. U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

- **Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

- **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress in connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the SF-LLL, "[Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#)" form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on [Grants.gov](#). See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 and 31 USC 1352 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

- **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

If the project proposed in this application is funded through another Federal financial assistance award, in part or in whole, the applicant must provide a statement detailing the potential funding overlap in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted or copy of Federal financial assistance award covering activities covered under this proposal. The statement and the description of overlap or duplication, when applicable, may be provided within the proposal or as a separate attachment to the application. Any overlap or duplication of funding between the proposed project and other active or anticipated projects may impact selection and/or funding amount. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects".

If selected for award, NPS reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Other budget information
- (b) Financial capability
- (c) Evaluation of risk
- (d) Name and phone number of the Designated Responsible Employee for complying with national policies prohibiting discrimination (See 43 C.F.R. § 17)

### **3. Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration:**

This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#) which replaces the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet in April 2022. A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s).

- **Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applicants can register on the [SAM.gov](#) website. The “Help” tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov “[Register with SAM](#)” page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity’s IRS information. There is no cost to register with SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with SAM.gov; please be aware you can register and request help for free. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

### **4. Submission Dates and Times**

Applicants are held responsible for their proposals being submitted to the National Park Service. Applications must be received by July 15, 2024 11:59 pm ET. Applicants are encouraged to submit the application well before the deadline. Note: Per 2 CFR 1402.204 (f) Bureaus and offices must consider the timeliness of the application submission. Applications that are submitted beyond the announced deadline date must be removed from the review process.

Application preparation time may take several weeks, so please start the application process as soon as possible. If it is determined that a proposal was not considered due to lateness, the applicant will be notified during the selection process.

### **5. Intergovernmental Review**

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” Applicants subject to EO 12372 must contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State’s process. The names and addresses of the SPOC’s are listed in the OMB’s home page at:

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/)

### **6. Funding Restrictions**

Costs incurred by the applicant prior to the start date of the period of performance of a signed Federal award are only allowable with written approval by a Financial Assistance Awarding Officer.

### **7. Other Submission Requirements**

Applications must be submitted by grants.gov to the National Park Service by the deadline identified in paragraph 4 above. Applications submitted by other means or not received by the deadline will not be considered.

In the event the applicant experiences technical difficulties with submitting their application, please contact: Steve Livingston at [steve\\_livingston@nps.gov](mailto:steve_livingston@nps.gov)

**START THIS PROCESS EARLY DON’T DELAY!**

## Section E: Application Review Information

### 1. Criteria

NPS will evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criteria in the project Narrative application requirement. Each applicant is required to provide a detailed project narrative, in accordance with section D.2., of the following criteria elements. It is HIGHLY recommended that the project narrative has sections labeled by criterion.

Criterion 1	
Organizational Structure	Weight 10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a formal governance and accountability structure.</li> <li>• Have sufficient staff or a plan to scale up in order to achieve stated programs and projects.</li> <li>• Have clearly identified hiring and enrollment standards for project leaders. Job descriptions for key staff (including biographies and resumes).</li> <li>• Support an environment that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion, and accessibility through work culture, trainings, and supervision practices.</li> </ul>	

Criterion 2	
Capabilities and Competencies	Weight 25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant’s demonstrated ability to engage active-duty military service members and families in park and nature-based programs.</li> <li>• Commitment to an evidence-based approach in the promotion of national parks, public lands, and waterways as a health resource.</li> <li>• Demonstrated success in the recruitment of underserved or historically underrepresented populations and diverse participants.</li> <li>• Demonstrated experience in multi-channel outreach and communications.</li> <li>• Experience working in partnerships with outside agencies and organizations.</li> </ul>	

Criterion 3	
Project Design and Implementation	Weight 25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant’s understanding of the issue to be addressed as evidenced by statement of the problem/description of the issue to be addressed.</li> <li>• Adequacy of the proposal including the goals, objectives, timelines, milestones, deliverables, and impact.</li> <li>• Clear articulation of how the continuum of nature-engagement opportunities will be delivered. How will programming move participants from invitation, to introduction, to engagement, and ultimately to empowerment.</li> <li>• Demonstrated creativity in considering ways to use partnerships, resource sharing, and other means to accomplish goals and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposal to encourage parks to participate in programming such as hosting an invitational call.</li> </ul>	

- Proposal to implement an evaluation plan and an accompanying recommendations report that will enhance the knowledge and build capacity of the NPS, DoD, and partner organizations to improve overall health outcomes for servicemembers and their families and support a sustainable, national program.

Criterion 4	
Past Performance	Weight 25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List and provide descriptions of outdoor engagement and/or health promotion programs, projects, or events that your organization has performed in the past three years with government and/or non-government entities (up to two examples).</li> <li>• List and provide descriptions of outreach and communication strategies or campaigns your organization has performed in the past three years with government and/or non-government entities (up to two examples).</li> <li>• List and provide descriptions of public health impact and evaluation programs your organization has performed in the past three years with government and/or non-government entities (up to two examples).</li> <li>• Demonstrated experience delivering programs, projects, or events targeting active-duty service members and families.</li> <li>• Demonstrated experience delivering programs, projects, and events in national parks.</li> <li>• Demonstrated expert ability and knowledge to successfully recruit and engage diverse racially, physically, socially, and economically disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to develop natural and cultural resource stewardship ethics in the program participants.</li> </ul>	

Criterion 5	
Budget	Weight 15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project budget will be evaluated for completeness and allowability (e.g. reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).</li> <li>• Budget effectiveness based on dollars spent to number of project participants engaged.</li> <li>• Budget clearly, accurately, and appropriately reflects the needs of the project with clear identified expense categories and realistic cost estimates (no lump sums).</li> </ul>	

## 2. Review and Selection Process

NPS personnel, and in some cases independent reviewers, will review all proposals. All proposals for funding will be considered using the criteria outlined above. A summary of the review panel comments may be provided to the applicant if requested.

### a. Initial Review

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; and (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program

determination). If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further review.

**b. Comprehensive Merit Review**

All applications that satisfactorily pass the initial review will be eligible for the Comprehensive Merit Review. Each criteria element will be scored on a 0-10 point scale:

10	Superior	(100 % of weighted average)
8	Good	(80 % of weighted average)
6	Satisfactory	(60 % of weighted average)
4	Marginal	(40 % of weighted average)
2	Poor	(20 % of weighted average)
0	Not Acceptable	(No score)

The following numerical rating values may be assigned: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0. The scoring of each criterion must be based on the strengths and weaknesses of the application narrative. To assist in assigning an appropriate score, the following will be used as a guideline:

Rating	Descriptive Statement
10	Superior: Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the Government's performance requirements and demonstrates no weaknesses.
8	Good: Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates a likelihood of meeting the Government's requirements, and demonstrates only a few minor weaknesses.
6	Satisfactory: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the Government's performance requirements. The Application contains weaknesses and/or a number of minor weaknesses.
4	Marginal: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the Government's performance requirements. The Application contains significant weaknesses and/or a significant number of minor weaknesses.
2	Poor: Applicant addresses some aspects of the criterion and demonstrates some doubt in the likelihood of successfully meeting the Government's requirements. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strength presented.
0	Not Acceptable: Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the Government's requirements.

**c. Selection**

The Selection Official may consider the merit review recommendation and the amount of funds available to select applications for funding.

#### **d. Discussions and Award**

The Government may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to: (1) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (2) the Government needs additional information to determine that the applicant is capable of complying with the requirements of DOI Financial Assistance Regulations, and/or (3) additional specific terms and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by the Government may preclude award to the applicant.

### **3. CFR – Regulatory Information**

See the National Park Service’s Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

#### **Evaluation of Applicant Risk**

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205, applications selected for funding will be subject to a pre-award risk assessment which may include a review of information contained within the applicant’s proposal, past audits, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and/or past performance on previous Federal financial assistance awards. Negative information that leads to an applicant being designated as “Medium Risk” or “High Risk” may result in specific conditions, as identified in 2 C.F.R. § 200.207, being incorporated into the final award.

Prior to making a Federal award, any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance (currently FAPIIS) will be reviewed and considered (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313). Applicants may review and comment about any information about itself in FAPIIS. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. §200.205

### **4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

Estimated date of Federal Award: September 30, 2024.

Estimated date notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants: July 15, 2024.

## **Section F: Federal Award Administration Information**

### **1. Federal Award Notices**

Upon being selected for the award, successful applicants will receive a notification of the selection of their application for funding. NPS estimates it will notify the applicant selected for award by July 15, 2024. A notice of selection is not an authorization to begin performance on an agreement. This notice will detail the next steps in the awarding process. Once all clearances and reviews have been conducted, a cooperative agreement will be sent for signature.



Work cannot begin before the non-Federal entity receives a fully executed copy of the cooperative agreement which contains the signature of the Financial Assistance Awarding Officer. Any pre-award costs incurred prior to the receipt of a signed agreement or written notice signed by a Financial Assistance Awarding Officer authorizing pre-award costs, is at the applicant's own risk. A signed cooperative agreement signed by a Financial Assistance Awarding Officer is the only authorizing document to begin performance.

Organizations whose applications have not been selected will be advised as promptly as possible.

## 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See the "DOI Standard Terms and Conditions" for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

### Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.315:

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

## 3. Reporting

- a. **Financial Reports:** All recipients must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

- b. **Performance Reports:** Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.
- c. **Real Property Reports:** Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Bureau will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award when applicable.
- d. **Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#) for more information on these restrictions. The Service will examine each conflict-of-interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the Service will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.339 Remedies for Noncompliance](#), including termination of the award.
- e. **Other Mandatory Disclosures:** The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.339 Remedies for Noncompliance](#), including suspension or debarment.

#### 4. Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance:

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. 200.

### **5. Significant Developments Reports:**

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

## **Section G: Federal Awarding Agency Contacts**

Program Technical Contact: Clay Hanna  
clay\_hanna@nps.gov

Program Administration Contact: Steve Livingston  
steve\_livingston@nps.gov

Application System Technical Support:

For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or Support@grants.gov.

## **Section H: Other Information:**

### **Payments**

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment,

including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.