U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Financial Assistance
Funding Opportunity Announcement

Program Name

Phase I Water Quality Assessment at Pipestone National Monument

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number:
P16AS00011

Announcement Type:
Initial

Issue Date: 12/16/2015
Application Due Date: 03/04/2016
Time: 5:00 p.m. CST

Agency Contact Information

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Midwest Regional Office
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Omaha, NE 68102
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Table of Contents
PROGRAM NAME ................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.Error! Bookmark not defined.

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description ................................................................. 1

Section II: Funding Opportunity Announcement Objectives and Goals .......................... 2
   A. Program Background Information ..................................................................... 2
   B. Program Objectives ......................................................................................... 7
   C. Term of the Agreement .................................................................................... 7

Section III: Application and Submission Information ...................................................... 7
   A. Address to Request Application Package ....................................................... 7
   B. Contents and Form of Application Submission ............................................... 7
   C. Submission from Successful Applicants ......................................................... 8
   D. Submission Dates and Times ......................................................................... 9
   E. Intergovernmental Review ............................................................................. 9
   F. Registration Process Requirements .............................................................. 9

Section IV: Application Review Information ............................................................... 10
   A. Review Criteria ............................................................................................ 10
   B. Review and Selection Process ..................................................................... 12

Section V: Award Administration Information .......................................................... 13
   A. Award Instrument Information ..................................................................... 13
   B. Funding Restrictions .................................................................................... 13
   C. Award Notices ............................................................................................ 14
   D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements ....................................... 14
   E. Reporting .................................................................................................... 16

Section VI: Other Information .................................................................................... 17
   A. Modification or Changes to the Announcement ........................................... 17
   B. Government Right to Reject or Negotiate .................................................. 17
   C. Evaluation and Administration by Non-Federal Personnel ......................... 17
   D. Notice of Right to Conduct a Review of Financial Capability .................... 18
   E. Notice of Potential Disclosure under Freedom of Information Act ............ 18
   F. Personally Identifiable Information ............................................................. 18

Appendix A - Application Package ............................................................................. 19
Forms SF 424, SF 424A, SF 424B ........................................................................... 19
## Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Agency Name:</th>
<th>Department Of The Interior, National Park Service</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding Opportunity Title:</td>
<td>Phase I Water Quality Assessment at Pipestone National Monument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement Type:</td>
<td>Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Opportunity Number:</td>
<td>P16AS00045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog Of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:</td>
<td>15.945 Cooperative Research and Training Programs – Resources of the National Park System; Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units CESU Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>Application Due Date: Friday, March 04, 2016 5:00 p.m. CST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Applicants:</td>
<td>Eligible Applicants must be a current partner member of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units National Network and a public or private institution of higher education or public/private nonprofit institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Authority:</td>
<td>16 U.S.C. §1a-2(j) authorizes the NPS to enter into cooperative agreements with public or private educational institutions, states, and their political subdivisions, for the purpose of developing adequate, coordinated, cooperative research and training programs concerning the resources of the national park system. Pursuant to such agreements, the cooperator may accept from or make available to the NPS technical and support staff, financial assistance for mutually agreed upon research projects, supplies and equipment, facilities, and administrative services relating to cooperative research units as the Secretary deems appropriate (research projects subject to Federal Acquisition Regulation excluded).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient Cost Share:</td>
<td>Cost Share Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Funding Amount:</td>
<td>Not to Exceed $10,000.00 for FY2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Number Of Agreements To Be Awarded:</td>
<td>One Award to Selected Eligible Recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Amount Of Funding Available:</td>
<td>$10,000 for Phase I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section II: Funding Opportunity Announcement Objectives and Goals

A. Program Background Information

Background
The National Park Service’s Pipestone National Monument (Monument) and Water Resources Division (WRD) are interested in conducting both a short- and long-term water quality assessment and monitoring program within and near the Monument. The Monument is concerned about possible surface water and groundwater contamination that may pose a health and safety risk to the American Indian quarriers, to the Monument staff, and to visitors. This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) outlines an approach in which partners may be enlisted to conduct the first of two phases of the assessment. The first phase would be to compile and analyze existing data on water quality from local, county, state, regional, and federal governmental entities (Phase I). The short-term goals are to first evaluate the extent to which water quality changes seasonally through the examination of existing sources of water quality data and information. It is likely that Pipestone Creek (and other nearby water sources) vary seasonally in water quality and that during the spring/summer period in which the pipestone is quarried by permitted American Indians, and when the park experiences its heaviest visitation, the highest levels of coliform bacteria, turbidity, nitrate, and pesticide concentrations, are present. Pipestone Creek within the Monument is also a habitat for the federally endangered Topeka Shiner, which is sensitive to degraded water quality conditions (Dodd and others, 2010).

The Monument is also considering a future approach that will satisfy long-term water monitoring and testing needs (Phase II). This approach would need to ensure that particular monitoring and testing protocols are maintained indefinitely for future park management for decision-making and policy development. Maintaining water quality within the Monument is consistent with 16USC 1, Subchapter LXI, NPS Management Policies, the National Park’s Healthy Parks Healthy People program. To these ends, the Monument and WRD are initiating a water quality and assessment project with a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) partner that has experience and resources in conducting water quality studies, particularly in the U.S. Upper Midwestern region.

Purpose
Through the compilation of existing data within and surrounding the Monument, the aim of Phase I will be to: 1) Determine baseline levels, ranges, and trends of turbidity, coliform counts, nitrate levels, pesticides, and other applicable water quality parameters; 2) Determine how the water quality from both within and surrounding the Monument varies seasonally; 3) Determine data needs and data gaps using existing screening criteria; 4) Compare newly published data with existing data; 5) Using existing data determine, if possible, the likelihood of mists arising from Winnewissa Falls, and groundwater in the pipestone quarries to contain the same contaminants as the surface waters upstream.

Requirements
The research will be directed and overseen by a Principal Investigator (PI) with a Ph.D. in hydrology, limnology, geology, ecology, biology, microbiology, water chemistry, or environmental science, or with demonstrable and comparable research experience, evidenced by a publication record demonstrating a professional level of research, analysis, and report preparation. It is expected that this record will reflect an understanding and ability to apply water quality study research methods, and a level of education and experience beyond that of a B.A. and two years of graduate study in one or more of the fields mentioned above. The researcher must demonstrate significant involvement in the research, writing, and the timely completion of water quality research.

Products
The products from this project will include both a hard copy and digital report documenting the existing data relative to the Phase I five project goals listed above. The report will include tables of the data and analysis showing the specific types of new data still needed for the Phase II water sampling and monitoring study. In the report, final water sampling and monitoring stations, both within and outside the Monument, need to be identified for Phase II.
**Background Regional Information**

Portions of four major watersheds in southwestern Minnesota lie in the Missouri River Basin: Upper Big Sioux, Lower Big Sioux, Rock, and Little Sioux River watersheds. They cover about 1,783 square miles in Lincoln, Pipestone, Murray, Rock, Nobles, and Jackson counties (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 2014). A recent study assessed 93 of 181 stream sections for aquatic life or aquatic recreation. Of these, only three were considered fully supporting of aquatic life, and one fully supporting of aquatic recreation. Fifty three sections were non-supporting of aquatic life and 31 non-supporting of aquatic recreation. None of the lakes in the Missouri River Basin met the aquatic recreation standard. Drinking water, recreation and aquatic life uses are affected by high nitrate, bacteria and turbidity levels. These stressors also are potentially hazardous to human health. Biotic impairments are likely a result of nonpoint source pollution and localized stressors linked to unstable channel conditions and poor in-stream habitat. Both of these conditions can be associated with high sediment loads. High nitrogen levels also are potentially impacting macroinvertebrate communities, as seen in other watersheds across southern Minnesota. Turbidity concerns are prolific and are as universal as impairments due to *E.coli*. Improvements need to be made in the watersheds to significantly reduce overland erosion by implementing soil conservation efforts and restoring natural vegetation along riparian zones (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 2014).

Due to the pervasive impairments found throughout the Missouri River Basin, there is a great need in the state for exploration of major stressors and receptors, and Phase I and II of this project will contribute, in part, to this need.

**Background Local Information**

Pipestone County is located in Southwestern Minnesota along the South Dakota border, approximately 200 miles Southwest of Minnesota’s Capital, St. Paul, and 45 miles Northeast of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Pipestone County had approximately 9,596 people living in its nine cities and twelve townships. The City of Pipestone is the county seat. Pipestone County is divided by the Coteau des Prairies also known as Buffalo Ridge, which separates the watersheds of the Minnesota and Missouri River basins. Pipestone County is one of the few counties in the state which does not have a natural lake. There is, however, one reservoir (Split Rock Creek) which provides impaired water recreation for the Split Rock Creek State Park.

The *Pipestone Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan (draft)* was released in August 2015. It is intended to identify existing and potential water resource issues in the context of watershed units and groundwater systems, informing specific implementation actions to achieve goals for sound hydrological management of water and related resources. The extent of the Monument falls within the City of Pipestone drinking water supply management area, and is designated as “vulnerable” to contamination of the waters recharging the wells that supply the City (Minnesota Department of Health, 2011).

The priority concerns listed below were selected by the Water Plan Task Force members by consensus, after carefully reviewing submitted concerns and comments, and then refined based on discussion in public meetings. While the assessment of priority concerns utilized the best available information, this plan rests solidly on data and analysis contained in previous editions of the county’s local water management plan. The priority concerns are listed below in order of priority.

The priorities are: 1) Creating reasonable environmental standards, 2) Protect and enhance the County’s surface water resources, 3) Protect and enhance the County’s ground water resources, 4) Reduce priority pollutants, and 5) Raise public awareness on the County’s key environmental issues (Pipestone County, 2015).

**Funds Available**

Funding for Phase I will not exceed $10,000. Note that cost is not the only criterion used in making a final selection from the pool of applicants. The proposed budget should include a CESU overhead rate of 17.5 percent. The project will be funded by the National Park Service. Only universities, NGOs, non-profit organizations, and research centers within the CESU network are eligible to apply.
Baseline Water Quality at Pipestone National Monument

The NPS-generated Baseline Water Quality Data Inventory and Analysis, Pipestone National Monument (1999) document presents the results of surface-water-quality data retrievals for the Monument performed primarily in the 1970s and 1980s from six United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) national databases: (1) Storage and Retrieval (STORET) water quality database management system; (2) River Reach File (RF3); (3) Industrial Facilities Discharge (IFD); (4) Drinking Water Supplies (DRINKS); (5) Water Gages (GAGES); and (6) Water Impoundments (DAMS). This document is one product resulting from a cooperative contractual endeavor between the National Park Service's (NPS) Service-wide Inventory and Monitoring Program, the National Park Service's Water Resources Division (WRD), and Horizon Systems Corporation to retrieve, format, and analyze surface water quality data for all units of the National Park System containing significant water resources. The primary goal of the project was to provide descriptive water quality information in a manner and format that was both consistent with the goals of the Service-wide Inventory and Monitoring Program and useable by park resource managers. The document provides: (1) a complete inventory of all retrieved water quality parameter data, water quality stations, and the entities responsible for the data collection; (2) descriptive statistics and appropriate graphical plots of water quality data characterizing period of record, annual, and seasonal central tendencies and trends; (3) a comparison of the park's water quality data to relevant EPA and WRD water quality screening criteria; and (4) an Inventory Data Evaluation and Analysis (IDEA) to determine what Service-wide Inventory and Monitoring Program "Level I" water quality parameters have been measured within the study area (National Park Service 1999). Additionally, Pipestone County wellhead protection areas are identified in Appendix B of their Wellhead Protection Plan (Pipestone County, n.d.) and the new Pipestone County Wellhead Protection Plan (Pipestone County 2015).

Many of the monitoring stations represent either one-time or intensive single-year sampling efforts by the collecting agencies. Eight stations within the study area (five within the park boundary) yielded longer-term records consisting of multiple observations for several important water quality parameters (Figure 1). The stations yielding the longer-term records within the park boundary are: (1) Pipestone Creek at the railroad bridge at the park boundary (PIPE 0015); (2) Pipestone Creek downstream of Lake Hiawatha by the quarry (PIPE 0027); (3) Pipestone Creek downstream of Winnewissa Falls near Willow (PIPE 0019); (4) Pipestone Creek 15 yards from north boundary fence (PIPE 0029); and (5) Pipestone Creek mouth at Lake Hiawatha (PIPE 0021). The stations yielding the longer-term records within the study area, but outside of the park boundary, are: (1) Pipestone Creek at upstream park boundary (PIPE 0014); (2) Side drainage ditch off of Pipestone Creek (PIPE 0006, not on figure); and (3) Pipestone Creek in main county drainage ditch (PIPE 0003, not on figure) (National Park Service 1999).
Figure 1. Selected water quality monitoring locations within and adjacent to Pipestone National Monument. Extracted from the NPS Water Resources Division baseline water quality data report (1999).
The results of the Monument water quality criteria screen found 13 groups of parameters that exceeded screening criteria at least once within the study area. Dissolved oxygen, pH, cadmium, copper, lead, and zinc exceeded their respective EPA criteria for the protection of freshwater aquatic life. Nitrate, nitrite plus nitrate, chloride, cadmium, lead, and methylene chloride exceeded their respective EPA drinking water criteria. Fecal-indicator bacteria concentrations (total coliform and fecal coliform) and turbidity exceeded the WRD screening limits for freshwater bathing and aquatic life, respectively (National Park Service 1999).

Overall, approximately 84 percent of the observations for Level I parameter groups were recorded since 1985. Data for alkalinity, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, water temperature, flow, clarity/turbidity, chlorophyll, sulfates/total dissolved solids/hardness, bacteria, and toxic elements were recorded at less than half of the 33 monitoring stations with data. Relative to other parameter groups, data were limited for alkalinity, flow, and chlorophyll. Results for 37 of the 126 EPA priority toxic pollutants (consisting of organic parameters and metals) were retrieved from STORET (National Park Service 1999).

Surface water resources in the Monument study area include: Pipestone, North Branch Pipestone, South Branch Pipestone, and many other perennial and intermittent creeks; Indian, Hiawatha, and several smaller developed lakes; and the Main, County, and other ditches. Based on the data inventories and analyses, surface waters within the study area have been impacted by human activities. Potential anthropogenic sources of contaminants include municipal wastewater discharges; agricultural operations; residential development; gravel pit operations; storm water runoff; recreational use; and atmospheric deposition (National Park Service 1999). Additionally, an unpermitted landfill was in use for many years adjacent to the southern boundary of the Monument which may be impacting groundwater quality.

**Additional Information on Pipestone National Monument**

Thirteen boreholes were installed in the Monument to ascertain the subsurface distribution of Catlinite (pipestone) during 1979 and 1980 (Morey 1983). It is unclear if or how these boreholes were plugged and abandoned. The City of Pipestone identified, in its Wellhead Protection Plan, that these boreholes are a potential pathway for contamination to enter the subsurface. Efforts should be made to locate these boreholes and assess their condition and their potential to act as a pathway for contamination to reach groundwater resources.

**References Cited**


Minnesota Department of Health, 2011. Pipestone drinking water supply management area (MN-00549), MN Department of Health, Environmental Health, Source Water Protection Unit.


B. Program Objectives
Phase I - Goals – Project Deliverables

The overall goal of this project is to assess both surface and groundwater quality because of a managerial concern that there is currently a risk to human health and safety in the outdoors park area due to contaminants in both the ground and surface water.

Work tasks include compile and review existing data sources at the Monument, City of Pipestone, County, and State, and Regional levels in order to:

1) Determine baseline levels, ranges, and trends of turbidity, coliform counts, nitrate levels, pesticides, and other applicable water quality parameters;
2) Determine how the water quality from both within and surrounding the Monument varies seasonally;
3) Determine data needs and data gaps using existing screening criteria;
4) Compare newly published data with existing data;
5) Using existing data, if possible, determine the likelihood of mists arising from Winnewissa Falls, and groundwater in the pipestone quarries to contain the same contaminants as the surface waters upstream.
6) Submit a report (hardcopy and digital) of all findings to Pipestone NM.
7) Provide a digital copy of all data and analyses to Pipestone NM.

C. Term of the Agreement
The term for this agreement is estimated to be one year, depending on the negotiated project scope. Agreements are not effective until fully executed with signature from the NPS Awarding Officer.

Section III: Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package
PLEASE NOTE: APPLICATIONS FOR THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV. SUBMISSION INFORMATION IS POSTED IN PART B OF SECTION IV BELOW.

An Application Package has been included within this Funding Opportunity Announcement for your convenience, found in Appendix A. The Application Package contains three mandatory forms, which must be submitted with your proposal, forms include: form SF-424 (Application for Financial Assistance), form SF-424A (Budget Information), and form SF-424B (Assurances) and SF-LLL (Lobbying). The Application Package can also be accessed and downloaded from the Synopsis page of this announcement in Grants.gov.

B. Contents and Form of Application Submission
You must complete the mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms, in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below, as required by this Funding Opportunity Announcement. Do not include any proprietary or personally identifiable information.
• Standard Form 424 (SF 424) - Application for Federal Assistance
  Complete this form as much as possible with all applicable information.

• Standard Form 424A (SF 424A) - Budget Information

• Detailed Budget Justification is required noting all cost categories.

• Standard Form 424B (SF 424B) – Assurances
  This form must be signed and submitted with the application.

• Indirect Costs
  This project will be awarded to a partner/member of a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU). Indirect costs will be capped at 17.5% of their Federally-negotiated indirect cost base, per Department of the Interior Indirect Cost Rate Deviation Memorandum of December 22, 2014.

• Project Narrative - Proposal Submission Format
  The proposal is a narrative description that should specifically address each of the review criteria (see Section IV). The proposal text must be no longer than 5 pages, no smaller than font size 11, and have 1-inch margins. The 5-page limit includes all text, figures, and references. (Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, resumes and the statement of indirect charges are not counted as part of the 5 page limit). Additionally, only information that is pertinent to the proposal should be included.

• Complete Application Package should include:
  ✓ Completed SF 424 – Application for Financial Assistance
  ✓ Completed SF 424 A – Budget Information
  ✓ Detailed Budget Justification
  ✓ Signed SF 424 B - Assurances
  ✓ Project Narrative – no more than 5 pages, see above
  ✓ Indirect Cost Rate, if applicable
  ✓ Resumes/Curriculum Vitae
  ✓ Other Documents required by program

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

• Other budget information
• Name and phone number of the Designated Responsible Employee for complying with national policies prohibiting discrimination (See 10 CFR 1040.5)
D. Submission Dates and Times

Submittals:

- Applicants are held responsible for their proposals being submitted to the National Park Service. Applications must be received by Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. You are encouraged to submit your application well before the deadline.

- Application preparation time may take several weeks, so please start the application process as soon as possible. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for award.

- If it is determined that a proposal will not be considered due to lateness, the applicant will be notified.

Where to Submit:

- Applications must be submitted to the national park service by the due date by grants.gov:

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/

E. Registration Process Requirements

There are several actions you must complete in order to submit an application with the Federal Government. Each applicant must register with the System of Award Management (SAM). You are required to have a DUNS number (Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System) in order to register with SAM. In order to submit an application through Grants.gov you must have an active SAM registration and register for submission permissions through the Grants.gov website. Utilize the following link to guide you through this process:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

Registration processes for SAM can be found at https://www.sam.gov

START THIS PROCESS EARLY DON’T DELAY!
Section IV: Application Review Information

A. Review Criteria

- NPS will evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criterion.

- Each applicant is required to provide a detailed narrative of the following criteria elements. It is **HIGHLY** recommended that the Project Narrative have sections labeled as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion 1</th>
<th>Technical Capability – Research Strategy &amp; Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The applicant shall provide a realistic plan that demonstrates the ability to fulfill the government's need in accordance with Part B: Program Objectives. This strategy shall describe how the prospective recipient will organize, manage, execute, and evaluate the project. The strategy shall include a completion schedule with timelines and the identification of repositories and other information sources to be searched.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failure to provide the requested information may indicate a lack of understanding of the requirement and may result in the application being excluded from further consideration.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion 2</th>
<th>Capacity of Principal Investigator &amp; Research Team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>The applicant shall provide a description of the entire proposed research team identifying the prime contractor and any subcontractors and specific areas of responsibility. The description shall identify lines of communication, the responsibilities of each proposed team member, and shall highlight the experience of the team in working jointly on similar type projects. The experience of the Principal Investigator in organizing and conducting similar studies shall be explained in detail. In addition, a resume for each proposed team member shall be provided (as appendix) showing the necessary background, skills, and experience of each individual. (As an appendix – number of pages does not count toward page maximums).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Principal Investigator: The research will be directed and overseen by a Principal Investigator (PI) with a Ph.D. in hydrology, limnology, geology, ecology, biology, microbiology, water chemistry, or environmental science, or with demonstrable and comparable research experience, evidenced by a publication record demonstrating a professional level of research, analysis, and report preparation. It is expected that this record will reflect an understanding and ability to apply water quality study research methods, and a level of education and experience beyond that of a B.A. and two years of graduate study in one or more of the fields mentioned above. The researcher must demonstrate significant involvement in the research, writing, and the timely completion of water quality research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion 3</td>
<td>Relevant Previous Experience</td>
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<td>The applicant shall submit a list of at least (2), but not more than (3), recent and relevant examples of completed projects, which should demonstrate the applicants’ and its team members' experience in performance of the work similar to that described in the SOW. For the purpose of this solicitation the term recent means projects that have been completed and the term relevant is defined as follows:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Relevant: Present/past performance effort involved essentially the same magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant: Present/past performance effort involved much of the magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Relevant: Present/past performance effort involved some of the magnitude of effort and complexities than this solicitation requires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Relevant: Present/past performance effort did not involve any of the magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The applicant must indicate whether it was the prime or subcontractor on each project. If the offeror was the prime contractor, the applicant shall also describe its primary role/duties in execution of the work (i.e. the major components of the project which were completed by the prime's staff and major components which were subcontracted out). The offeror shall also provide information on the project as to the size, complexity, and distinctive and/or unique features of the project. The offeror should provide specific information to demonstrate that it has relevant experience as it relates projects listed in the Specifications</td>
</tr>
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</table>
B. Review and Selection Process

1. Merit Review

The following adjectival ratings will be used to evaluate proposals. The ranking of each criterion must be based on the strengths and weaknesses of the application narrative. To assist in evaluating the proposal, the following will be used as a guideline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the Government's performance requirements, and demonstrates no weaknesses. Information submitted demonstrates an exceptional and clear understanding of all aspects of the requirements established by the RFP. The proposal contains no significant weaknesses, deficiencies or disadvantages and significantly exceeds most or all the requirements established by the RFP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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. Information submitted demonstrates the Offeror's potential to exceed performance or capability standards. Proposal reflects some strength that may be of benefit to the Government. Deficiencies noted are of a minor nature. The submittal demonstrates all requirements of the RFP are understood, and all requirements have been met or exceeded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>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. Information submitted demonstrates Offeror's potential to meet performance or capability standards. Proposal meets the minimum standard requirements of the RFP. Few or no advantages or strengths. The proposal contains only minor weaknesses. The submitted proposal is complete and comprehensive, reflecting an understanding of the scope and depth of the RFP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>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 significant minor weaknesses. Proposer possesses only a few of the desired attributes and qualities expressed in the RFP, for the factor being evaluated. The Government may still receive benefit from the proposal submitted. Weaknesses and deficiencies noted are correctable without major revision of the proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>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. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strength presented. Proposer lacks the desired attributes and qualities necessary to receive a higher rating. Weaknesses and/or deficiencies noted are uncorrectable without a major revision of the proposal.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
2. **Selection**

The Selection Official may consider the merit review recommendation in selecting a Recipient.

3. **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 recipient is capable of complying with the requirements of DOI Financial Assistance Regulations and/or (3) special terms and conditions are required. Failure to resolve satisfactorily the issues identified by the Government will preclude award to the applicant.

**Section V: Award Administration Information**

A. **Award Instrument Information**

A project will be funded, subject to the availability of funds, by issuance of a grant agreement/”stand-alone” cooperative agreement.

The final award agreement will identify the amount of funding provided by NPS, any cost share provided by the Recipient, a detailed Statement of Work (SOW) for the project, a project plan and detailed project 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/sub-recipients. Additionally, 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. Cost categories can include but are not limited those costs items included on the SF424A and SF424C.

An agreement issued by the NPS and signed by the NPS Awarding Officer obligates NPS funds. Notification of a successful proposal does not constitute authority to incur costs. Costs incurred prior to receipt of a signed cooperative without explicit written permission from the Awarding Officer will not be reimbursed.

Once the cooperative agreement for a successful proposal has been signed by the NPS Awarding Officer, the recipient may incur costs as specified in the approved budget submittal.

B. **Funding Restrictions**

**Funding:**

All funding is contingent upon the availability and appropriation of funds by the United States Congress.

**Cost Principles:**

Costs must be allowable in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles referenced in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles.

**Pre-award Costs:**

Must comply with 2 CFR Part 200.458 and requires prior written approval from the Awarding Officer.
C. Award Notices

After an applicant’s proposal is selected for award, the applicant will receive a letter from the Awarding Officer. This letter 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 recipient receives a fully executed copy of the cooperative agreement which contains the signature of the Awarding Official.

Notice of Selection:
NPS will notify the applicant selected for award by March 31, 2016. This notice of selection is not an authorization to begin performance. (Pre-award expenses will not be reimbursed).

Organizations whose applications have not been selected will be advised as promptly as possible. This notice will explain why the application was not selected.

D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

   By accepting Federal financial assistance, your organization agrees to abide by the applicable federal regulations in the expenditure of federal funds and performance under this program.

   http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

   2 CFR Part 200 - UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS

2. Standard Award Terms and Conditions
   This agreement incorporates the Standard Award Terms and Conditions found at the following Dept. of Interior website as if they were given here:

   http://www.doi.gov/pam/programs/financial_assistance/TermsandConditions.cfm

   Acceptance of a Federal Financial Assistance award from the Department of the Interior carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions of award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated either directly or by reference in the award document. Code of Federal Regulations/Regulatory Requirements, as applicable are listed below (Contact the Awarding Officer with any questions regarding the applicability of the following):

   • 2 CFR Part 175 Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000
   • 2 CFR Part 182 & 1401 Government-wide Requirements for a Drug-Free Workplace
   • 2 CFR Part 180 & 1400 Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)
   • 43 CFR 18 New Restrictions on Lobbying

3. Special Terms and Conditions

Order of Precedence:
Any inconsistency in the agreement shall be resolved by giving precedence in the following order: (a) Any national policy requirements and administrative management standards; (b) 2
CFR Part 200, in its entirety; (c) requirements of the applicable OMB Circulars and Treasury regulations; (d) special terms and conditions; and (e) all agreement sections, documents, exhibits, and attachments; (f) and the recipient’s project proposal.

Modifications:
The agreement may be modified by written agreement signed by both the recipient’s Authorized Representative and the NPS Awarding Officer. Administrative changes (i.e. Awarding Officer name change, etc.) which do not change the statement of work, agreement amount, etc. or otherwise affect the recipient may be signed unilaterally by the Awarding Officer. Additionally, a unilateral modification may be utilized if it should become necessary to impose remedies for non-compliance, suspend or terminate the agreement in accordance with 2 CFR 200, Section 200.338 – 200.342.

All other changes shall be made by means of a bilateral modification to the agreement. No oral statement made by any person, or written statement by any person other than the NPS Awarding Officer shall be allowed in any manner or degree to modify or otherwise effect the terms of the agreement.

4. Payments
All applicants must be registered in the System for Awards Management (SAM) prior to award under this FOA. Instructions for registering for SAM are located at http://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM. All applicants must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times while they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration.

All applicants must also be registered with and willing to process all payments through the Department of Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. All recipients with active NPS financial assistance agreements must be enrolled in ASAP under the appropriate Agency Location Code(s) (ALC) and the Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number prior to the award of funds. If a recipient has multiple DUNS numbers they must separately enroll within ASAP for each unique DUNS Number and/or Agency. Note that if your entity is currently enrolled in the ASAP system with an agency other than NPS, you must enroll specifically with NPS in order to process payments.

5. Liability
a) Insurance:
The recipient shall be required to (1) obtain liability insurance or (2) demonstrate present financial resources in an amount determined sufficient by the Government to cover claims brought by third parties for death, bodily injury, property damage, or other loss resulting from one or more identified activities carried out in connection with this financial assistance agreement.

b) Insured:
The federal government shall be named as an additional insured under the recipient's insurance policy.

c) Indemnification:
The recipient hereby agrees to indemnify the federal government, NPS or from any act or omission of the Recipient, its officers, employees, or (members, participants, agents,
representatives, agents as appropriate), (1) against third party claims for damages arising from one or more identified activities carried out in connection with this financial assistance agreement and (2) for damage or loss to government property resulting from such an activity. This obligation shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

i. To purchase public and employee liability insurance at its own expense from a responsible company or companies with a minimum limitation of one million dollars ($1,000,000) per person for anyone claim, and an aggregate limitation of Three Million Dollars ($3,000,000) for any number of claims arising from any one incident. The policies shall name the United States as an additional insured, shall specify that the insured shall have no right of subrogation against the United States for payments of any premiums or deductibles due thereunder, and shall specify that the insurance shall be assumed by, be for the account of, and be at the insured's sole risk. Prior to beginning the work authorized herein, the Recipient shall provide the NPS with confirmation of such insurance coverage.

ii. To pay the United States the full value for all damage to the lands or other property of the United States caused by the Recipient

iii. To provide workers' compensation protection to the Recipient, its officers, employees, and representatives.

iv. To cooperate with NPS in the investigation and defense of any claims that may be filed with NPS arising out of the activities of the Recipient, its agents, and employees.

v. In the event of damage to or destruction of the buildings and facilities assigned for the use of the Recipient in whole or in part by any cause whatsoever, nothing herein contained shall be deemed to require NPS to replace or repair the buildings or facilities. If NPS determines in writing, after consultation with the Recipient that damage to the buildings or portions thereof renders such buildings unsuitable for continued use by the Recipient, NPS shall assume sole control over such buildings or portions thereof. If the buildings or facilities rendered unsuitable for use are essential for conducting operations authorized under this Agreement, then failure to substitute and assign other facilities acceptable to the Recipient will constitute termination of this Agreement by NPS.

d) **Flow-down:**
For the purposes of this clause, "Recipient" includes such sub-recipients, contractors, or subcontractors as, in the judgment of the recipient and subject to the Government's determination of sufficiency, has sufficient resources and/or maintains adequate and appropriate insurance to achieve the purposes of this clause.

E. **Reporting**

**Financial Status Reports:**
Report of expenditures is required as documentation of the financial status of awards according to the official accounting records of the recipient’s organization. The financial information will be reported by completing and submitting the Federal Financial Report (FFR), SF425. Reports may be required quarterly, semi-annually or annually. The reporting requirements will be determined by the Awarding Officer and defined in the individual Task Agreements.
Reports shall be submitted no more than 30 calendar days after the end of the reporting period. The final FFR is no more than 90 calendar days after the end date of the agreement. The recipient shall submit a completed original Federal Financial Report (FFR).

The FFR can be downloaded at:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/standard_forms/ffr.pdf

The NPS Awarding Officer will review the report for patterns of cash expenditures and assess whether performance or financial management problems exist. Before submitting the FFR to the NPS Awarding Officer, recipients must ensure that the information submitted is accurate, complete, and consistent with the recipient’s accounting system. The recipient’s Authorized Certifying Official’s signature on the FFR certifies that the information in the FFR is correct and complete and that all outlays and obligations are for the purposes set forth in the agreement documents, and represents a claim to the Federal government. Filing a false claim may result in the imposition of civil or criminal penalties.

Performance Reports:
Performance Reports may be required quarterly, semi-annually or annually. The reporting requirements will be determined by the Awarding Officer and defined in the Agreements.

Reports shall be submitted no more than 30 calendar days after the end of the reporting period. The final FFR is no more than 90 calendar days after the end date of the agreement. Recipients shall submit an annual performance report to the NPS Awarding Officer and the Agreement Technical Representative at the end of each year of the agreement detailing project activity and participant profile information.

Non-Compliance:
Failure to comply with the reporting requirements contained in this agreement may be considered a material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the award. Non-compliance may result in withholding of future payments, suspension or termination of the agreement, recovery of funds paid under the agreement, and the withholding of future awards.

Section VI: Other Information

A. Modification or Changes to the Announcement
Notices of any modifications to this announcement will be posted on Grants.gov. You can receive an email when a modification or an announcement message is posted. When you download the application at Grants.gov; you can also register to receive notifications of changes through Grants.gov.

B. Government Right to Reject or Negotiate
NPS reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all applications received in response to this announcement and to select any application, in whole or in part, as a basis for negotiation and/or award.

C. Evaluation and Administration by Non-Federal Personnel
In conducting the merit review evaluation, the Government may seek the advice of qualified non-Federal personnel as reviewers. The Government may also use non-Federal personnel to conduct
routine, nondiscretionary administrative activities. The applicant, by submitting its application, consents to the use of non-Federal reviewers/administrators. Non-Federal reviewers must sign conflict of interest and non-disclosure agreements prior to reviewing an application. Non-Federal personnel conducting administrative activities must sign a nondisclosure agreement.

D. Notice of Right to Conduct a Review of Financial Capability
NPS reserves the right to conduct an independent third party review of financial capability for applicants that are selected for negotiation of award (including personal credit information of principal(s) of a small business if there is insufficient information to determine financial capability of the organization).

E. Notice of Potential Disclosure under Freedom of Information Act
Applicants should be advised that identifying information regarding all applicants, including applicant names and/or points of contact, may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, whether or not such applicants are selected for negotiation of award.

F. Personally Identifiable Information
In responding to this Announcement, Applicants must ensure that Protected Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is not included in the following documents: Project Abstract, Project Narrative, Biographical Sketches, Budget or Budget Justification. These documents will be used by the Merit Review Committee in the review process to evaluate each application. PII is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as:

Any information about an individual maintained by an agency, including but not limited to, education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity, such as their name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother’s maiden name, biometric records, etc., including any other personal information that is linked or linkable to an individual. This definition of PII can be further defined as: (1) Public PII and (2) Protected PII.

Public PII:
PII found in public sources such as telephone books, public websites, business cards, university listing, etc. Public PII includes first and last name, address, work telephone number, email address, home telephone number, and general education credentials.

Protected PII:
PII that requires enhanced protection. This information includes data that if compromised could cause harm to an individual such as identity theft.