

FY25 REMOVAL APPLICANT WEBINAR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: When is the Application Deadline? and What is required?

A: Letters of Intent (LOIs) are due on September 27th, 2024. Letters of intent should be 3 pages. A fourth page may be submitted showing only project site maps and photographs of the project area and/or the debris targeted for removal. Please see the NOFO for application and submission instructions. Applicants will receive notifications if they are invited to submit a full proposal. If invited, full proposals are due to grants.gov by January 31st, 2025.

Q: Is there an upper cap on the individual project funding amount?

A: The maximum federal request is \$10,000,000. However, the typical funding level for the federal share of project awards ranges from \$2,000,000 to \$6,000,000. Proposals requesting over \$6,000,000 are expected to be proposals including a subaward competition for other organizations to apply for funding for localized removal activities.

Q: Would items such as tires, construction debris and similar be considered as "marine debris" (High #'s/vol. or in deep water?)

A: The NOFO defines marine debris as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes". This would include tires and construction debris.

Q: Would small community-based NGO's be eligible for this grant to clean drifting plastics along their shores?

A: For the removal funding opportunity, activities must include impactful, large marine debris removal projects. Drifting plastics would not be considered large marine debris removal.

Q: Can councils of govt apply?

A: Yes, councils of government would be eligible applicants.

Q: Do you also fund research of marine debris removal equipment under this opportunity?

A: No, research and development proposals are not priorities for this solicitation and will be withdrawn from this competition.

Q: Would a stormwater trash capture project within a coastal watershed qualify for grant funding under this program?

A: Please register for our FY25 MDP Interception Technology applicant webinar next week on Wed, Aug 14th at 3 PM ET to determine if your project would better align with the competition priorities.

Q: We have a current award that ends in 2027-will we be at a competitive disadvantage if we submit for this RFP? 2026 RFP?

A: Funding is primarily aimed at supporting new or impactful removal efforts, or programs that require funding to scale-up or expand their existing removal efforts to achieve broader and more impactful outcomes. Proposals that scale-up projects that were funded through the previous

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Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Marine Debris Removal competition are allowed, but the proposals must clearly indicate how additional funding will lead to outcomes above and beyond what was considered through the previous grant application.

As a point of clarification about an FY26 competition, please note, there is no guarantee that we will have another competition in FY26; future funding opportunities are dependent on future BIL appropriations and our programmatic and agency priorities, and given our focus right now on this (FY25 competition) we, as a program, have not had any concrete discussions about our competition plans for FY26.

Q: We're interested in marine debris removal for high-flow and high-traffic rivers in Pittsburgh. Would this be eligible?

A: Priority will be placed on proposals that clearly demonstrate the beneficial impacts the removal project will have on NOAA trust resources, and the surrounding coastal environment or community. NOAA trust resources generally refer to marine/Great Lakes habitats and resources in which NOAA has a stewardship interest.

Q: How can we collaborate with people in the global South?

A: For this competition, projects must take place in the United States, territories, or Freely Associated States (or their adjacent waterways).

Q: Is there a checklist for applying?

A: Besides the requirements listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, you can also find some helpful application resources that are available on the funding opportunities pages of our website at marinedebris@noaa.gov.

Q: How many years/timeframe do recipients have to spend on awarded funds?

A: Again, applications should cover a project period of two to four years in duration, and successful applicants would have full access to grant funding for the entire duration of whatever period of performance is on the official award. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be no sooner than October 1, 2025.

Q: We're getting a few questions on whether smaller projects are eligible for funding, (ie. less than \$100K)

A: There is a minimum funding request for this competition of \$1M.

Q: I understand that any match funds or in-kind donations that an applicant can contribute will not be considered in the evaluation of project proposals. Is that only at the LOI stage, or is that the case in the full proposal stage as well?

A: Match is not considered in the evaluation of project proposals at either the LOI or full proposal stage.

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Q: Does the program have an anticipation of regional distribution for this award?

A: We certainly consider geographic distribution of projects in our project selection process, however ultimately projects are selected based on their merits and how aligned they are to the goals and priorities of the competition.

Q: If we have a multitude of letters for support- can we do a page with the list and provide those letters on request if invited to submit a full proposal?

A: Letters of support are not required at the LOI stage, but rather you can demonstrate support of the project through a description of the project team and their roles and responsibilities.

Q: For sites in Hawaii and Alaska, marine debris is generated outside the United states. How would we address "prevention" in this case?

A: Please identify that the source is outside of where removals are occurring. It is encouraged to include general marine debris awareness in cases where projects can't point directly to a clear source or a clear target audience that is responsible for the debris.

Q: Can you provide examples of large scale marine debris?

A: The notice of funding opportunity specifically lists ADVS, DFG, and other debris that typically cannot be removed by hand. Tires or other things that are miscellaneous large scale marine debris. It does need to be large and not something you could pick up on your own or in a small group.

Q: Does illegal dumping in riparian zones count as large scale marine debris?

A: Yes, as long as they meet the other competition priorities/guidelines, these items would be eligible for this competition.

Q: Are creosote pilings eligible for this competition?

A: Yes, creosote pilings are eligible if the specific circumstances meet the other competition priorities and guidelines. Removal and disposal methods should be described in the application to confirm there will not be a release of creosote into the environment as a result of proposed project activities.

Q: We have derelict boats, old vehicles, fishing nets and a lot of other debris in the bay. Are old vehicles in the bay eligible for this competition?

A: Yes, old vehicles certainly qualify as "large marine debris" in this competition.

Q: Are relic vessels eligible for this competition?

A: Generally yes, there is no restriction on the age of a vessel for this competition. However, all recommended awards will be reviewed by the relevant State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for their confirmation the proposed removals have no potential to cause effects on historic properties eligible or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Applicants proposing removals focused primarily on relic vessels are encouraged to provide an explanation for why NOAA MDP should not have any concerns about receiving SHPO approval to remove the targeted historic vessels. Additionally, applicants should indicate their knowledge of how the

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removal of these vessels will be a benefit rather than a detriment to the environment they have been in for an extended period of time.

Q: Do beached abandoned vessels also qualify?

A: Yes, however, priority will be placed on proposals that clearly demonstrate the beneficial impacts the removal project will have on NOAA trust resources, and the surrounding coastal environment or community. NOAA trust resources generally refer to marine/Great Lakes habitats and resources in which NOAA has a stewardship interest. If the case can be adequately made that by removing these beached vessels there will be a beneficial impact on these resources, they would be eligible. However, please note that the proposal will likely be competing against in-water derelict vessels, so there needs to be a strong connection made to NOAA Trust Resources, and the likelihood of these vessels becoming marine debris.

Q: Do applicants have to find sites where the debris is located or are there sites known to NOAA and locations shared?

A: NOAA does not have a list of targets for you to pick from and go out and remove. Our grant competitions are essentially asking you to propose a marine debris removal project that you think is important within your community, and deserving of federal resources. The goal of your proposal is to convey that importance to us.

Q: Does NOAA Trust resources include state and Federal waters? Can projects occur in federal waters and federal tidal/coastal property?

A: Yes, we typically use the term "NOAA trust resources" to refer to those species, habitats and resources for which NOAA has stewardship authority, and they can often overlap with or can be found within state and/or federal waters. A letter of support from the landowner or federal manager would be encouraged, along with the applicant acknowledging how they will acquire the necessary permissions, permits, etc.