

The project budget must include a breakdown of the following costs, as applicable, by category -- salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other. (Note: Use of Standard Form 424A is suggested as it provides a model template for this information, and will be required in the grant application package for all projects that are selected for funding.) The total budget must reflect the 1:1 match required by statute. For information on what may be counted as the non-federal matching share, refer to section 2.7. Applicants wishing approval of pre-award costs should include such a request in their application to NOAA and identify the costs, the time period in which they occurred, and a justification for their need as associated with the project. For information regarding pre-award costs, refer to section 5.1.b.

The negotiated price of the property, or interest in property, should be based on the fair market value determined by an independent appraisal conducted by a state-approved appraiser. Before funds can be disbursed to the grant recipient for purchase of a property, or interest in property, using CELCP funds, the applicant must obtain and submit the appraisal to NOAA (refer to section 4.4.b.) Independent appraisals must reflect nationally recognized appraisal standards, including, to the extent appropriate, the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition, (<http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/land-ack/>).

If an appraisal has been completed at the time of application and the applicant wishes to pursue the acquisition at a price above the appraised value, the applicant will need to demonstrate reasonable effort to negotiate at the appraised value and submit written justification for the higher price based on reasonableness, prudence, public interest, additional or updated appraisals, estimated condemnation/trial costs, and/or valuation.

If an appraisal is not available at the time the project application is submitted, the applicant may submit a good-faith estimate of the cost for the project based on market value or agreement with the willing seller. However, if the project is selected for funding, the amount of the grant cannot exceed the estimated cost in the project application. An appraisal will be required at the time the applicant submits a formal grant application to NOAA (refer to section 5.4). If the appraised value is higher than the estimated cost, the applicant will be required to make up the difference, and

if that is not possible, the project may have to be withdrawn or terminated.

e. Certification of Compliance with Federal Laws, Regulations and Policies. As part of the project application checklist (attached as Appendix B), the applicant must answer questions that will enable NOAA to determine whether a project may have an adverse impact and whether additional information may be required to satisfy the requirements of applicable Federal laws, regulations, or policies. If an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared for the project, attach a copy with the application. States will be responsible for ensuring that any project applications submitted to NOAA are consistent with the state's approved coastal management program and any applicable NERR Management Plans. Refer to section 6.0, which describes the applicability of requirements under Federal laws, regulations and policies.

f. Documentation of Willingness or Intent to Sell. The applicant must submit documentation that the current owner is a willing participant in a process of negotiation for possible sale of property, or interests in property, for conservation purposes and that the landowner has been advised of the applicability of Public Law 91-646, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970 (refer to section 6.8). This documentation may be in the form of a letter of willingness or intent, option letter, contract, or other similar form. If not submitted with the project application, it will be required with the grant application to NOAA.

#### 4.3 National Ranking and Selection Process

NOAA will conduct a peer review process to prioritize and select among all projects nominated by states through their competitive process as follows:

a. Peer review and ranking process. A national peer review panel that consists of at least six members will review each project nominated by a state. Membership of the panel will be made up of at least one representative from each of the following: NOAA, another Federal land conservation program, the state coastal resource management community, estuarine reserve community, and two from the non-governmental sector (i.e., industry, conservation community). Each member will rank projects according to the degree to which they meet national criteria and submit individual rankings to NOAA. No member may have a vested interest or stand to benefit from any of the proposed projects.

Membership of the panel may be reconstituted annually, and NOAA may identify alternates in the event that substitutions are needed.

b. Ranking criteria. Projects will be reviewed and prioritized according to the degree to which they meet the national criteria described in section 3.1b. NOAA will establish weighting factors for these criteria, in consultation with the coastal states, and will provide these ranking criteria to the states with its notification of availability of funding. Within these criteria, NOAA may also consider the availability of support for long-term management and stewardship, and success in leveraging other sources of funding. All ranking factors will be described in the annual notification.

c. Selection of approved projects. The Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management or his/her designee will serve as the selecting official for projects, based on the national rankings as well as availability of funds. In selecting projects, NOAA may consider geographic distribution of projects, as well as other factors deemed necessary to select among similarly-ranked projects, as described in the annual notification. The selecting official may maintain and select from a contingency list, in the event that any approved projects fall through or are completed below the planned cost.

#### 4.4 Grant Application to NOAA - Selected Projects

NOAA will notify each state of projects that have been selected through the competitive process. For each of these projects, the state must submit the following materials, which, when combined with the original project application, will complete the application for Federal financial assistance. States are encouraged to consolidate multiple projects into one application, with each project as a separate task, particularly for projects that will be awarded to local governments. NOAA may, at its discretion and in consultation with the relevant coastal state, agree with the state to accept an application from, and make a grant directly to, an agency other than the lead agency in order to expedite the completion of an approved projects that will be implemented by that other agency.

Grant application materials. The following materials must be submitted to NOAA, in order to complete the application for Federal financial assistance:

a. Standard forms for Federal financial assistance. These forms can be