

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program (Prescott Grant Program)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-PRPO-2011-2002494

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.439, Marine Mammal Data Program

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by <http://www.grants.gov/> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on October 5, 2010. Use of a delivery service other than U.S. mail must be documented with a receipt. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject an application. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline.

Application Submission: Applications should be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov/>. If on-line submission is not possible, hard copy applications may be submitted by postal mail or commercial delivery to NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources (F/PR), ATTN: Michelle Ordone, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13620, Silver Spring, MD 20910. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NMFS Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program is charged under the Marine Mammal Protection Act with facilitating the collection and dissemination of reference data on stranded marine mammals and health trends of marine mammal populations in the wild. The John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program is conducted by NOAA to provide Federal assistance to eligible members of the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network to: 1) Support basic needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, 2) fund scientific research objectives designed to answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals, and 3) support facility operations directly related to the recovery, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals. This document describes how to submit proposals for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2011 and how NMFS will determine which proposals will be funded. This document should be read in its entirety, as some information has changed from the previous year.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the Prescott Grant Program) was established under the Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 1421f-1). The Prescott Grant Program is administered through the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The Prescott Grant Program provides Federal assistance to eligible stranding network participants for: (1) basic needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals; (2) scientific research objectives designed to answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals; and (3) facility operations directly related to the recovery, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals. A stranded marine mammal is a marine mammal in the wild that is (1) dead and on a beach, shore, or in waters under the jurisdiction of the U.S. or (2) is live and on a beach or shore of the U.S. and unable to return to the water, is in apparent need of medical attention, or is in waters under the jurisdiction of the U.S. but is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power or without assistance.

The MMHSRP, through close coordination with Regional Stranding Networks, has the following objectives: (1) improve the rescue, care and treatment of stranded marine mammals; (2) reduce the health risk to animals, humans, and the ocean environment during response to, and rehabilitation and release of, stranded marine mammals; (3) collect life history, biological, and biomedical data from live and dead stranded marine mammals; (4) develop baseline reference data on the health of wild marine mammal populations, normal stranding rates, and causes of morbidity and mortality; improve the rapid detection of morbidity and mortality events; (5) collect archival samples for future retrospective studies on causes of mortality or illness, including genetics and genomics, and for placement in the National Marine Mammal Tissue (and Serum) Bank and other properly curated, professionally accredited archival facilities; and (6) refine and/or utilize comprehensive and consistent guidance for the rescue and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals, collection of specimens, quality assurance, and analysis of tissue samples.

NMFS has reserved a portion of Prescott funds to make emergency assistance available for catastrophic stranding events throughout the FY 2011 funding year on an as-needed

basis, until expended. These emergency events should fall under one of the three program categories, and one or more National or Regional funding priorities. Emergency assistance is available to eligible organizations or individuals even if they are receiving funds from the Prescott Grant Program's annual competitive award cycle. An organization or individual cannot receive emergency funds for the same activities funded under their current award during the same time period, unless a catastrophic stranding event has occurred. The applicant must demonstrate that a catastrophic stranding event has occurred and provide a strong justification and explanation for the need of additional funding. The justification should include why the current award is inadequate to meet the current needs. Emergency funds are intended to be used for catastrophic pulse events, not for the continuous operation of a stranding network member. Responders to such stranding events should contact the NMFS Regional Office that oversees the area of action or the NMFS Program Office (NMFS Office of Protected Resources, Silver Spring, MD) for further information. Until further guidance is published, those seeking emergency assistance funding should prepare all forms and documentation, outlined in Section III, Proposal Instructions and Requirements of this document. Emergency proposals should not be submitted on Grants.gov. Please submit an electronic copy and one paper copy of an emergency proposal to the NMFS Office of Protected Resources (see address under Application Submission).

B. Program Priorities

The applicant must select one category in which to place their proposal. Some projects may fit into more than one category; however, you should determine which category best fits the goals and objective of your proposed project. For this solicitation, all applications must fall within one of the three following categories:

Category A- Scientific research objectives designed to test hypotheses and answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals to fulfill national needs in marine mammal strandings, rehabilitation, or animal or public health. Proposals submitted in Category A should clearly state the hypothesis to be tested, outline analytical, quality assurance, and statistical techniques, address sample size and predicted power, and explain potential biases inherent in sampling methods.

Category B - Basic and enhancement needs of organizations for response (including disentanglement of marine mammals), treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, such as facility enhancements and major program changes or initiatives: B1 for organizations that have not previously received a Prescott award and B2 for stranding network facilities that have previously received a Prescott award to fulfill regional or national needs in marine mammal strandings, rehabilitation, or health.

Category C - Modifications and/or upgrades to rehabilitation facilities (existing and new) to meet or exceed the NMFS Rehabilitation Facility Standards and Standards for the Release of Rehabilitated Marine Mammals.

For each of the proposal categories, the MMHSRP has identified multiple National-level funding priorities. Regional funding priorities have also been identified under the proposal Category B. Each NMFS Region has separately identified funding priorities that will improve the capabilities of their Regional Stranding Network in achieving the goals of the Prescott Grant Program in the FY2011 competitive cycle, in addition to the National priorities. These Program priorities pertain only to marine mammal species under the authority of the Department of Commerce (cetaceans and pinnipeds, except walrus). No FY2011 Prescott funds will go towards projects involving construction of brand new buildings or facilities for the rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals. However, construction projects in established facilities (i.e., those that involve build-outs, alterations, upgrades, and renovations to existing spaces) would be appropriate as part of a Category B or C project.

Each of the priorities are of equal importance, whether National and/or regional. The purpose of the priority list is to guide applicants in proposal development by identifying those projects that will best compete during the FY2011 grant cycle for these limited funds, and to provide technical reviewers with guidance for their evaluations. Details of the three categories and the National and regional funding priorities are as follows:

Category A- Fund scientific research objectives designed to test hypotheses about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals. Data or samples may be collected from stranded animals as well as bycaught animals or live animals in the wild, which may serve as controls or for comparisons in specific study designs. All proposals under Category A must link the use of live animals in the wild or by-caught animals to known or estimated health issues of stranded marine mammals and ultimately to the health of the population or to the development and validation of new tools and techniques to assess such health conditions.

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Collect and analyze specimens and/or data (using quality control procedures) from stranded marine mammals to retrospectively or prospectively assess health trends in wild populations of cetaceans and pinnipeds, with emphasis on infectious (i.e., zoonotic, epidemic) agents and diseases.
- b. Collect and analyze samples and/or data, including interpretation and modeling, to evaluate the trends and causes of strandings and the health of marine mammals in the Gulf of Mexico impacted by multiple morbidity and

mortality risk factors including the Deepwater Horizon Oil spill.

- c. Collect and analyze samples and/or data for baseline information, trends and correlations between population demographics, life history, biology, movement and distribution, diet, health, and environmental parameters (e.g., environmental oscillations or harmful algal blooms), as they relate to strandings and overall population health.
- d. Develop new tools or use developed tools to assess auditory capabilities of, or anthropogenic sound-related impacts on, stranded marine mammals (e.g., baseline sensory capabilities; physiology, resolution, and pathophysiology of gas bubbles in stranded cetaceans) and investigate potential effects of age, natural factors, ototoxic drugs, chemical contamination, infections, and other anthropogenic impacts on marine mammal auditory capabilities.
- e. Develop new tools, use developed tools, or validate tools to assess the health or specific disease(s) of stranded marine mammals including molecular diagnostic tools such as genomics, proteomics, metabonomics, PCR, and diagnostic imaging.

2. Regional Funding Priorities - There are no additional regional priorities for Category A.

Category B- Support basic and enhancement needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, such as facility enhancements and major program changes or initiatives. NOTE: All organizations applying under Category B should be authorized to conduct stranding network activities as of October 5, 2010, either through a Stranding Agreement or official designee status from the applicable NMFS Region, or under MMPA Section 109(h) authority.

B1. Support basic and enhancement needs of organizations that have not previously received a Prescott award for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals.

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Foster the development of stranding network operations to build capacity and infrastructure to enable sustainable response in the area. This includes the collection of Level A data from a majority of stranded animals.
- b. Foster the creation of new marine mammal rehabilitation facilities, or assist current stranding network members to expand their program to include live animal rehabilitation, in areas where none currently exist.
- c. Train new responders to improve consistency and quality of assessments, documentation, and data management for live and dead stranded marine

mammals.

2. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

a. Alaska Region

- i. Enhance the quality and consistency of data collected and reported from stranded marine mammals (i.e., Level A data, standardized necropsy examinations and reports, standardized sample analyses, increase supply of gear caches) in Western and Northern Alaska, as well as other areas of low and/or intermittent coverage in the state.
- ii. Support training of staff and volunteers for response, and data collection.
- iii. Foster community outreach and education regarding marine mammal stranding response and science.
- iv. Analyze and publish data related to historical Alaska marine mammal strandings and health.
- v. Continue development, support, and training for the Alaska Stranding Network (i.e., regional and statewide meetings, training, etc.).

b. Northeast Region

- i. Enhance rehabilitation capacity for cetaceans in areas with low or intermittent coverage.
- ii. Enhance large whale stranding response to include equipment and resources for at-sea documentation, recovery of floating carcasses (including identification of landing sites in response area or throughout the NER), necropsy, genetic analysis, sampling, skeletal salvage, and disposal options.
- iii. Enhance documentation and data collection of entanglement injuries and how injuries may lead to serious injury or mortality.
- iv. Enhance our understanding of marine mammals as a reservoir of infectious diseases by collecting and analyzing data from stranded marine mammals.
- v. Organizational enhancement for marine mammal stranding data management and data quality assurance protocols.
- vi. Enhance capability and capacity for storing and archiving samples in conditions that ensure sample stability (i.e. ultra low freezer).
- vii. Enhance capability and capacity to respond to oil spill events, includes identification of needed equipment and resources for temporary holding sites for stabilization and cleaning of animals.

c. Northwest Region

- i. Develop capability for response and Level A data collection in areas with

- low or intermittent coverage.
 - ii. Secure basic infrastructure (facilities, equipment, supplies, administrative support) to support a sustainable response level for investigation of marine mammal stranding events.
 - iii. Increase response capabilities to respond to live stranded sea lions.
 - iv. Increase response capabilities to respond to marine mammals affected by oil spills.
- d. Pacific Islands Region
- i. Build capacity for stranding response and rehabilitation for each island in the Main Hawaiian Island chain.
 - ii. Enhance the quality and consistency of data collected and reported from dead marine mammals in good condition (i.e., rapid response, standardized necropsy examinations and reports, standardized sample analyses).
 - iii. Enhance necropsy facilities to conduct thorough investigations of odontocetes (e.g., beaked whales, pilot whales, and false killer whales).
 - iv. Expand facility capacity to rehabilitate more marine mammals.
 - v. Provide training for live animal response throughout the Pacific Islands Region.
- e. Southeast Region
- i. Provide Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approved tags and post-release monitoring/tracking of injured, stranded and released, or entangled marine mammals throughout the Southeast Region. Provide general summary information to NMFS once tracking is complete.
 - ii. Address gaps in or enhance stranding response coverage, capability, Level A data collection (live and/or dead), and increase the number of necropsies conducted in the following geographic areas where there is little or no coverage: Florida (Pasco County through Escambia County), Alabama, Louisiana, and/or the Caribbean.
 - iii. Provide necropsy training or funding to attend necropsy trainings for stranding organizations in the SER. These trainings could include, but are not limited to: large whale necropsy training, advanced sampling techniques, in particular for sonar related stranding events, and veterinary response to live marine mammal strandings.
 - iv. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough necropsies on dead stranded marine mammals in good condition rapidly prior to degradation- particularly during mass stranding events, large whale stranding events, and Unusual Mortality Events and in areas where there is little to no geographic coverage: Florida (Pasco County through Escambia County), Alabama,

Louisiana, and/or the Caribbean. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough diagnostics, such as histopathology and cytology, on stranded marine mammals. Enhance or upgrade permanent and/or mobile necropsy facilities. This includes staging equipment caches for small and large cetaceans throughout the Southeast Region.

- v. Provide funds and/or capabilities for active surveillance of marine mammal strandings in areas with little to no geographic coverage: Florida (Pasco County through Escambia County), Alabama, and Louisiana.
- vi. Provide support and/or equipment for the capture and rescue of entangled marine mammals and animals deemed out-of-habitat by NMFS. Provide sub-contracts to NOAA approved capture and rescue personnel.
- v. Provide large whale response capabilities in Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina. These could include, but are not limited to: drugs and equipment for euthanasia, retrieving large whale carcasses (e.g. towing to shore), equipment for thorough necropsies and disposal of carcasses, and providing training opportunities for future Necropsy Team Leaders in the Southeast Region.

f. Southwest Region

- i. Enhance response to dead stranded cetaceans in Mendocino County.
- ii. Enhance response to and documentation of dead stranded pinnipeds in Southern California (Santa Barbara County through San Diego County) and far Northern California (Del Norte County through Sonoma County).
- iii. Enhance education and outreach materials to improve community awareness regarding the marine mammal stranding and disentanglement response network or identified problem areas (e.g., picking up non-abandoned seal pups).

B2. Support basic and enhancement needs of organizations that have previously received Prescott funding for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals.

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Enhance the quality, consistency, quantity, reporting, and sharing of Level A, B, and C data collected from stranded marine mammals, including: complete diagnostic screening on stranded animals; equipment necessary to collect samples and perform analyses; and detection and reporting of emerging diseases.
- b. Enhance attendance and participation by professional staff and facility volunteers in training, particularly in the areas of the Incident Command

System; public health; marine mammal disease and treatment issues; and veterinary care.

- c. Improve capacity for response to mass strandings, hazardous material spills, Unusual Mortality Events, natural disasters, out-of-habitat situations, and other events impacting multiple animals, including live animal triage, treatment, short- and long-term care, and necropsy and sample analysis of dead animals.
- d. Analyze current and/or previously-collected tracking and sighting data to assess post-release success of rehabilitated animals. Develop criteria for post-release monitoring.
- e. Use developed tools to provide equipment and training to the Stranding Network on conducting diagnostic auditory tests on stranded marine mammals. This could include staging auditory equipment caches.

2. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

a. Alaska Region

- i. Increase capacity to collect, archive, and analyze data from stranded marine mammals to investigate overall health parameters, prey types, diseases, and immune and reproductive functions.
- ii. Enhance the quality and consistency of data collected and reported from stranded marine mammals (i.e., standardized necropsy examinations and reports, standardized sample analyses, increase supply of gear caches)
- iii. Enhance the training of staff and volunteers for response, treatment, and data collection.
- iv. Enhance outreach programs and education opportunities for staff and volunteers.
- v. Enhance large whale stranding response and necropsy to determine cause of death, underlying factors, and history of human interactions (including entanglement scars and vessel strikes) including safe carcass retrieval.
- vi. Enhance pinniped disentanglement protocols, equipment and training.
- vii. Analyze and publish data related to historical Alaska marine mammal strandings and health.
- viii. Continue development, support, and training (e.g., regional and statewide meetings, training, etc.) for the Alaska Stranding Network.

b. Northeast Region

- i. Enhance documentation and assessment of marine mammal ship strike and entanglement injuries using standard methods and materials.

- ii. Enhance seal and small cetacean disentanglement protocols, equipment and training.
- iii. Enhance large whale stranding response to include equipment and resources for at-sea documentation, recovery of floating carcasses (including identification of landing sites in response area or throughout the NER), necropsy, genetic analysis, sampling, skeletal salvage, and disposal options.
- iv. Enhance ability to assess the short and long-term effects and outcomes of stranding response, human interaction and rehabilitation on marine mammals in the NER.
- v. Enhance resources for routine surveillance of infectious diseases in live animals, including rehabilitated animals.
- vi. Enhance floating (and beached) large whale (or other floating marine mammals) marking or tagging methods to aid in proper identification and monitoring of carcasses to help aid in data for drift analysis.
- vii. Enhance capability and capacity to respond to oil spill events, includes identification of needed equipment and resources for temporary holding sites for stabilization and cleaning of animals.

c. Northwest Region

- i. Secure basic infrastructure (e.g., facilities, equipment, supplies, and administrative support) to support a sustainable response level for investigation of marine mammal stranding events.
- ii. Broaden capabilities to perform thorough necropsies and diagnostics on unusual stranded marine mammal species and to perform thorough necropsies on dead specimens in good condition rapidly prior to degradation.
- iii. Develop capability for handling, stabilization, or treatment of live stranded odontocetes through training.
- iv. Increase response capabilities to respond to live stranded sea lions.
- v. Collect and analyze data from marine mammals released from rehabilitation to investigate post-release survival success and health status.
- vi. Enhance sample collection from stranded killer whales and/or harbor porpoise to support taxonomic and stock identification research in progress
- vii. Develop protocols for the disposal of dead marine mammals that carry contaminant burdens based on current knowledge of contaminant levels and requirements for disposal of contaminated materials.
- viii. Increase response capabilities to respond to marine mammals affected by oil spills.

d. Pacific Islands Region

- i. Build capacity for stranding response and rehabilitation for each island in

the Main Hawaiian Island chain.

- ii. Enhance the quality and consistency of data collected and reported from dead marine mammals in good condition (i.e., rapid response, standardized necropsy examinations and reports, standardized sample analyses).
- iii. Enhance necropsy facilities to conduct thorough investigations of odontocetes (e.g., beaked whales, pilot whales, and false killer whales).
- iv. Expand facility capacity to rehabilitate more marine mammals.
- v. Provide training for live animal response throughout the Pacific Islands Region.

e. Southeast Region

- i. Provide Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approved tags and post-release monitoring/tracking of injured, stranded and released, or entangled marine mammals throughout the Southeast Region. Provide general summary information to NMFS once tracking is complete.
- ii. Address gaps in or enhance stranding response coverage, capability, Level A data collection (live and/or dead), and increase the number of necropsies conducted in the following geographic areas where there is little or no coverage: Florida (Pasco County through Escambia County), Alabama, Louisiana, and/or the Caribbean.
- iii. Provide necropsy training or funding to attend necropsy trainings for stranding organizations in the SER. These trainings could include, but are not limited to: large whale necropsy training, advanced sampling techniques, in particular for sonar related stranding events, and veterinary response to live marine mammal strandings.
- iv. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough necropsies on dead stranded marine mammals in good condition rapidly prior to degradation- particularly during mass stranding events, large whale stranding events, and Unusual Mortality Events and in areas where there is little to no geographic coverage: Florida (Pasco County through Escambia County), Alabama, Louisiana, and/or the Caribbean. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough diagnostics, such as histopathology and cytology, on stranded marine mammals. Enhance or upgrade permanent and/or mobile necropsy facilities. This includes staging equipment caches for small and large cetaceans throughout the Southeast Region.
- v. Provide funds and/or capabilities for active surveillance of marine mammal strandings in areas with little to no geographic coverage: Florida (Pasco County through Escambia County), Alabama, and Louisiana.
- vi. Provide support and/or equipment for the capture and rescue of entangled marine mammals and animals deemed out-of-habitat by NMFS. Provide sub-

contracts to NOAA approved capture and rescue personnel.

- v. Provide large whale response capabilities in Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina. These could include, but are not limited to: drugs and equipment for euthanasia, retrieving large whale carcasses (e.g. towing to shore), equipment for thorough necropsies and disposal of carcasses, and providing training opportunities for future Necropsy Team Leaders in the Southeast Region.

f. Southwest Region

- i. Secure basic infrastructure (fund raising capability, facilities, equipment, supplies, and administrative support) to support a sustainable response level for investigation of marine mammal stranding events.
- ii. Maintain or improve qualifications of staff and volunteers for marine mammal response and rehabilitation through training and educational opportunities.
- iii. Enhance the quality and consistency of data collected and reported from stranded marine mammals (i.e., standardized necropsy examinations and reports, standardized sample analyses)
- iv. Enhance large whale stranding response and necropsy to determine cause of death, underlying factors, and history of human interactions (including entanglement scars and vessel strikes).
- v. Enhance response to and documentation of dead stranded pinnipeds in Southern California (Santa Barbara County through San Diego County) and far Northern California (Del Norte County through Sonoma County)
- vi. Enhance resources for routine surveillance of infectious diseases in stranded animals, including rehabilitated animals.
- vii. Enhance education and outreach materials to improve community awareness regarding the marine mammal stranding and disentanglement response network or identified problem areas (e.g., picking up non-abandoned seal pups)

Category C - Support needed modifications and/or upgrades to rehabilitation facilities (existing and new) to meet or exceed the "Policies and Best Practices" - Rehabilitation Facility Standards and Standards for the Release of Rehabilitated Marine Mammals (available on the following website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/health>).

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Enhance capability to: meet minimum animal spacing requirements; construct quarantine enclosures; improve record keeping; and enhance the ability to comply with all other facets contained in the Rehabilitation Facility Standards.
 - i. Develop standard operating procedures and protocols for treatment, rehabilitation, and health certification to meet the Rehabilitation

Facility Standards and Standards for the Release of Rehabilitated Marine Mammals

- b. Enhance diagnostics, testing, and husbandry and veterinary practices to reduce the risk of new or altered diseases into the wild
 - c. Enhance physical plant capabilities to increase the quality of care and diagnostics (e.g., ultra-cold freezers for sample storage and archiving)
 - d. Develop standard operating procedures and protocols for ensuring human safety
 - e. Develop training for rehabilitation practices to meet the Rehabilitation Facility Standards
2. Regional Funding Priorities - There are no additional regional priorities for Category C.

C. Program Authority

16 USC 1421 f-1

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that approximately \$4,000,000 may be available for distribution under the FY 2011 annual competitive Prescott Grant Program. Applicants are hereby given notice that these funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. Therefore, exact dollar amounts cannot be given. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The maximum Federal award for each grant cannot exceed \$100,000, as is stated in the legislative language (16 U.S.C. 1421f-1). Funds may be set aside from the annual appropriation to provide for emergency assistance awards to eligible stranding network participants. These emergency funds will be available until expended.

There is no limit on the number of proposals that can be submitted by the same stranding network participant during the FY2011 competitive grant cycle. However, stranding network participants will receive no more than two awards per year as part of the competitive program. The two awards must be for completely independent projects that are clearly separate in their objectives, goals, and budget requests and must be successful in the competitive review process. Eligible researchers applying as Principal Investigators, but not independently authorized under MMPA Section 112(c), MMPA Section 109(h) (50 CFR 216.22), or the National Contingency Plan for Response to Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Events, can only receive one award per year as part of the competitive cycle.

Authorized stranding network participants and researchers may be identified as Co-Investigators or collaborators on as many proposals as needed as long as no more than 100 percent of their time is funded through the Prescott Grant Program. In addition, Department of Commerce (DOC) and Department of Interior (DOI) employees may act as collaborators if they are responsible for performing analyses on data or samples collected under a Prescott award. See section I.F. for Eligibility requirements.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years beyond the award period.

If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, the applicant would do so solely at their own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Notwithstanding any verbal or written assurance that applicants have received, pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless the Grants Officer approves them in accordance with 15 CFR 14.28.

B. Project/Award Period

This solicitation announces that approximately \$4,000,000 may be available for distribution under the FY 2011 competitive program. Prescott awards may have a maximum project period of three years, but the total Federal award share cannot exceed \$100,000 regardless of the length of the project period. We will not accept proposals requesting incrementally funded projects exceeding \$100,000.

If an applicant would like to continue work on a project funded through this program beyond the approved award period and obligated award funds have not been expended by the end of this period, the applicant may notify the assigned Federal Program Officer no less than 30 days prior to the end of the period to determine eligibility for a no-cost extension. If the money is expended and funds are needed to continue the project, the applicant should submit another proposal during the next competitive award cycle (FY 2011) or seek an alternate source of funding. If a proposal is selected for funding, we have no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, NOAA will fund Prescott grants or cooperative agreements at a maximum of a \$100,000 award, with a maximum project period of three years.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

All eligible applicants must currently be an active, authorized participant or researcher in the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network. Eligible applicants must be: 1) Stranding Agreement (SA) holders or their designee organizations; 2) holders of researcher authorization letters issued by a NMFS Regional Administrator; or 3) an eligible Federal, state, or local government personnel or tribal personnel (pursuant to MMPA Section 109(h) (16 U.S.C. 1379(h))). An applicant cannot be a current full- or part-time employee or contractor of DOC or DOI.

i. In Good Standing Criteria. All eligible applicants must meet the following in good standing criteria:

- a. If the applicant is a designated Principal Investigator of an MMPA and/or Endangered Species Act (ESA) scientific research or enhancement permit holder, the applicant must have fulfilled all permit requirements. The applicant must not have any pending or outstanding enforcement actions under the MMPA or ESA.
- b. The applicant must have complied with the terms and responsibilities of the appropriate SA, MMPA Section 109(h) authorization, or researcher authorization letter. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) completion of all reporting requirements; 2) cooperation with state, local, and Federal officials; 3) cooperation with state and local officials in the disposition of stranded marine mammals; and 4) cooperation with other stranding network participants.
- c. The applicant must have cooperated in a timely manner with NMFS in collecting and submitting Level B and Level C data and samples, when requested.
- d. The applicant must not have any current enforcement investigation for the take of marine mammals contrary to MMPA/ESA regulations.
- e. The applicant must not have any pending NMFS notice of violation(s) regarding the policies governing the goals and operations of the Stranding Network and SA, if applicable (e.g., probation, suspension, or termination).

ii. Category Specific Criteria. All eligibility criteria specified for the participant's category must be met in order for a proposal to be considered for funding. Organizations and individuals must meet the following eligibility criteria specific to their category of participation:

a. SA Holder Participant or SA Designee Participant

SA participants must be holding a current, active SA for stranding response and/or rehabilitation from a NMFS Regional Administrator or the Assistant Administrator. SA Designee participants must be holding a current, active letter of designation from a NMFS SA holder. Designees cannot request authorization for activities beyond the scope of what is

authorized by the SA to the agreement holder.

b. Researcher Participant

Researcher participants must be holding a current, active authorizing letter for the proposed award period from the appropriate NMFS Regional Administrator or the Assistant Administrator to salvage stranded marine mammal specimens and parts or samples therefrom for the purpose of utilization in scientific research (50 CFR 216.22). Persons authorized to salvage dead marine mammal specimens under this section must register the salvage with the appropriate NMFS Regional Office within 30 days after the taking occurs. Researchers who are authorized under an MMPA/ESA Scientific Research Permit must still obtain an authorizing letter from the Regional Stranding Coordinator in order to use parts or specimens from stranded animals. Researcher participants that would not require an authorizing letter from the NMFS Regional Administrator (i.e., they will be working with data only and not possessing samples or specimens) must still provide a letter of eligibility from the Regional Stranding Coordinator (see IV.B.8). Researcher participants must also have designated Co-Investigator(s) that are active NMFS authorized stranding network participants in good standing, and provide documentation to this effect.

c. State, Local, Federal Government Employees or Tribal Participants

State and local government officials or employees participating pursuant to MMPA Section 109(h) (16 U.S.C. 1379(h)) for marine mammal species not listed under the ESA must fulfill reporting obligations outlined in 50 CFR 216.22. Government officials must be involved in areas of geographic need (i.e., municipality or larger region with no existing SA holder).

iii. Letter of Eligibility. All applicants must submit a letter of eligibility issued by the appropriate NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinator (or NMFS Regional Office). This letter is required in order to be considered for an award in this funding cycle. The letter of eligibility states that you are: 1) an eligible stranding network participant or researcher at the time of the application submission and during the award period; 2) in good standing; 3) have a history of participation in/with the stranding network or that your organization is from a local area with no pre-existing stranding response and/or rehabilitation capabilities. A copy of your SA or research authorization will not be considered as proof of eligibility. Any proposal that does not provide a letter from the NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinator will not be considered eligible and will not be considered for further review. Contact information for the NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinators to request this letter is available on the following website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/coordinators.htm>, or you may contact the Program Office at the address in the Agency Contacts, Section VII.

We support cultural and gender diversity in our programs and encourage eligible women and minority individuals and groups to submit proposals. Furthermore, we recognize the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate marine management policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas. We encourage proposals from eligible individuals, government entities, universities, colleges, and businesses in U.S. insular areas as defined by the MMPA (Section 3(14), 16 U.S.C.

1362). This includes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

We are strongly committed to broadening the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), which include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas in our programs. The DOC/NOAA/NMFS vision, mission, and goals are: to achieve full participation by MSIs; to advance the development of human potential; to strengthen the Nation's capacity to provide high-quality education; and to increase opportunities for MSIs to participate in, and benefit from, Federal financial assistance programs. The Prescott Grant Program encourages all eligible applicants to include meaningful participation of MSIs whenever practicable.

Applicants are not eligible to submit a proposal under this program if they are an employee of the DOC or DOI. NOAA/NMFS employees (whether full-time, part-time, or intermittent) cannot help in the preparation of proposals, except for providing information on data or sample analyses as an identified collaborator/Co-Investigator in the proposal. Since this is a competitive program, NOAA/NMFS employees cannot provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for any proposal. For collaborative activities with current NOAA programs (e.g., the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank (NMMTB), the National Institute of Standards and Technology), those programs can write a letter verifying they are: collaborators; the applicant may participate in the NMMTB; or the applicant is currently participating in the National Marine Analytical Quality Assurance Program. Proposals encompassing activities conducted under the authority of a MMPA Scientific Research Permit issued to a DOC or DOI organization (e.g., NMFS Regional Science Center) should include a copy of the permit and a letter from the Principal Investigator (DOC/DOI employee) verifying that the work is being conducted with their approval. Federal employee travel costs or salaries are not allowable costs under this program. MMHSRP staff (at the Regional and National level) are available to provide information regarding statistics on strandings; MMHSRP programmatic goals and objectives; and ongoing marine mammal programs. MMHSRP staff and other Federal Program Officers can provide guidance on application procedures and proper completion of required forms.

Unsatisfactory performance under prior or current Federal awards, including delinquency in submitting progress and financial reports, may result in proposals not being considered for funding under the 2011 Prescott Grant Program.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

All proposals submitted must provide a minimum non-Federal cost share of 25 percent of the total budget (i.e., $.25 \times \text{total project costs} = \text{total non-Federal share}$). Therefore, the total Federal share will be 75 percent or less of the total budget. For a proposed total Federal share of \$100,000, the minimum non-Federal share is \$33,334 (total budget of \$133,334; $.25$

x \$133,334 = \$33,334). For a proposed total Federal share of \$80,000, the minimum non-Federal share is \$26,667 (total budget of \$106,667; $.25 \times \$106,667 = \$80,000$). Cost share must be an integer, so please round up. The applicant can include a non-Federal cost share for more than 25 percent of the total budget, but this obligation will be binding. In order to reduce calculation error when determining the correct cost share amounts, we urge all applicants to use the cost share calculator on the Prescott Program webpage (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/proposals/costshare.htm>).

Legislation under which the Prescott Grant Program operates requires this cost sharing, or non-Federal match, to leverage the limited funds available for this program and to encourage partnerships among government, private organizations, non-profit organizations, the stranding network, and academia to address the needs of marine mammal health and stranding response. If a proposal does not comply with these cost share requirements, the proposal will not be returned to the applicant and it will not be considered in this annual funding cycle. Pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a, match may be waived for applicants that are residents in the U.S. insular areas (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U. S. Virgin Islands).

The Federal Program Officer will determine the appropriateness of all non-Federal cost sharing proposals, including the valuation of in-kind contributions, according to the regulations in 15 CFR 14.23 and 24.24. An in-kind contribution is a non-cash contribution, donated or loaned, by a third party to the applicant. In general, the value of in-kind services or property used to fulfill a non-Federal cost share will be the fair market value of the services or property. The fair market value is the cost of obtaining such services or property, had they not been donated, or of obtaining such services or property for the period of a loan. The applicant must document the in-kind services or property used to fulfill the non-Federal cost share. If we decide to fund a proposal, we will require strict accounting of the in-kind contributions within the total non-Federal cost share included in the award document. The Grants Officer is the DOC official responsible for all business management and administrative aspects of a grant and with delegated authority to award, amend, administer, close out, suspend, and/or terminate awards. The Grants Officer is the final approving authority for the award, including the budget and any cost-sharing proposals.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

1. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals. In order to determine whether such permits and approvals have been obtained or requested, the applicant must include in the proposal package either: 1) an application cover letter from the Prescott applicant to the appropriate authorizing entity requesting permits (e.g., MMPA scientific research/enhancement permit, etc.) or approvals, or 2) a copy of the cover letter of the final permit or approval. The applicant must be able to provide the entire permit or approval if requested by the Prescott

Grant Program.

If the proposed activities fall under the jurisdiction of a facility's IACUC, the applicant must have requested or obtained approval from the IACUC prior to applying for funding (as required by the Animal Welfare Act, 9 CFR 2.30-2.31). If the proposed data collection involves intrusive research (50 CFR 216.27(c)(6)) or if animals must be held after rehabilitation has been completed (prevented from release), the applicant must also obtain a MMPA (and ESA, if applicable) scientific research and enhancement permit before the proposal will be considered for funding. Intrusive research is defined under 50 CFR 216.3 as a procedure that involves: a break in or cutting of the skin or equivalent; insertion of an instrument or material into an orifice; introduction of a substance or object into the animals' immediate environment that is likely either to be ingested or to contact and directly affect animal tissues; or a stimulus directed at animals that poses a risk to the health or welfare of the animal or has the potential to impact normal function or behavior. Activities directly related to the individual animal's health assessment, standard diagnostics, treatment, approved post-release monitoring, or release are separately authorized by NMFS under the authorizations for stranding network participants (SAs). These activities do not require an additional permit.

If proposed activities will take place within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, State Parks, and other Federal or state-designated protected areas, it is the applicant's responsibility to request and obtain from the appropriate government agencies any necessary permits or letters of agreement for conducting the proposed activities.

For further information on permit requirements and applications procedures for Federal natural resource permits, contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources (see Section VII, Agency Contact(s)) or see the following website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/>. You may also use the pre-application guide located at: <http://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/> to help determine if your work will require additional permits or approvals.

For proposals involving construction projects, it is the applicant's responsibility to request or obtain all building, water quality, air quality, wetland, or other necessary permits and include documentation of such requests or approvals in the proposal package. Documentation must, to the extent possible, include environmental information that has been, or will be, submitted to the appropriate Federal, state, and local government offices (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information, for required information for each proposal category). These documents will help the Prescott Grant Program in determining the potential for environmentally significant activities and ensure NMFS compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Applications will be reviewed to determine if the proposed activities were analyzed in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) for the MMHSRP. For those activities analyzed in the FPEIS, no further environmental documentation will be required. For applications whose activities were not analyzed in the FPEIS, program staff will use the Grants NEPA Checklist to ensure that sufficient environmental documentation has been provided to determine the appropriate level of environmental analysis needed to comply with NEPA. Proposal activities may be categorically excluded or an Environmental Assessment (EA) may be necessary. For those applications needing an EA, affected applicants will be informed after the peer review stage. Applicants will be requested to assist in the preparation of an EA by providing all necessary information to complete the assessment (prior to the award).

Receipt of required MMPA (and ESA, if applicable) scientific research and enhancement permits and verification of IACUC approval will be required prior to awarding of funds. The awarding of funds will be delayed if other Federal, state, and local permits, etc are not obtained or if necessary environmental analyses are not provided.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. Please note that Form CD-346 is required for the following applicants: Sole Proprietorship, Partnerships, Corporations, Joint Venture, and Non-profit Organizations. Form CD-346 is not available on Grants.gov, but can be found at: <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/ago/grants/forms.cfm>. An application package may be received by contacting Michelle Ordono, Prescott Grant Program, NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources (F/PR), 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13620, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Phone: (301) 713-2322; or e-mail at Michelle.Ordono@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the following instructions and requirements by the deadline of 11:59 PM, EST, Tuesday, October 5, 2010, for application submission under the Prescott Grant Program. Proposals should be submitted via the Grants.gov website. If you encounter a problem and cannot submit your application electronically, a hard copy of the application will be accepted. One signed original (printed on one side) and two signed paper copies (may be double-sided) of the complete proposal package may be submitted. The original proposal and copies should not be bound in any manner. You should also submit an electronic copy, on a CD, of the narrative project description. The unbound original application, two copies, and the optional electronic copy must be sent to the address listed in Section IV.E. of this

document and postmarked by the submission deadline in order to be considered in the FY2011 competition. All proposals must be in 10-point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins.

Applicants must choose and identify one category and the specific funding priority or priorities within that category to which the proposal is addressing. If the proposal addresses more than one priority, list first the priority that most closely reflects the objective of the proposal. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the Prescott Grant Program or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

All applications must include the following information:

1. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Form (SF)-424 and SF-424B or SF-424D: The SF-424, SF-424B or SF-424D must be the cover sheets for the application. An application is not complete without the SF-424. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number (Item #10 on SF-424) is 11.439, and the title is "Marine Mammal Data Program." For item 13 of SF-424, a start date no earlier than August 1, 2011 should be selected. For item 16, the Congressional district of the applicant (a) is the district which contains the mailing address of the applicant. The Congressional district of the project (16 b) includes all districts where activities will be conducted.

2. SF-424A of SF-424C (Budget Information) and Budget Narrative (no page limit): The SF-424A is required for proposals requesting a Federal amount that does not include construction activities or in which construction activities are less than 50 percent of the total Federal amount. The SF-424C is required for construction proposals that include a requested Federal amount that is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the total Federal amount. Both Federal and non-Federal columns on these forms must be filled in completely and separately. The amounts per category and total amounts must correspond with the budget narrative and justification.

Each application must have a detailed budget narrative and corresponding spreadsheet describing the total project costs, including contributions and donations. Total project costs are the amount of funds required to accomplish the proposed activities in the Project Description. The narrative must justify the itemized costs per category between Federal and non-Federal shares and the corresponding direct and indirect cost totals. For the non-Federal share, the itemized costs in the budget narrative and spreadsheet should be separated into cash and in-kind contributions. If in-kind contributions are included, briefly describe the method for calculating the value of these contributions.

Indirect costs can be included in the budget if the applicant currently has a negotiated indirect cost rate with the Federal government. Indirect costs are overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., rent, water service, insurance) that are incurred for common or

joint objectives and cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. Indirect costs can be included in both the Federal and non-Federal cost shares, as long as the method of calculation is clear. The Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total direct costs for the proposal. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount over the 25 percent level as matching funds. If indirect costs are included, the application must include a copy of the current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal government (see Section IV.D.2). This copy will not be included in the page limit requirements. Indirect costs may not be included if the applicant does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate with the Federal government. These costs may be itemized as direct costs.

Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. NOAA strongly encourages applicants to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure that your proposal is competitive. Funds are allowed for travel to professional meetings and conferences. Applicants are encouraged to present at meetings when possible, rather than solely attending them.

We will not consider fees, fundraising activities, travel for Federal employees, salaries for Federal employees, or profits as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project activities during the project period. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between the applicant and the NOAA Grants Officer and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse applicants for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share.

3. Title Page (1 page limit): A title page must be included for each application. The title page must list the proposal title, project duration (with a start date no earlier than August 1, 2011), applicant name, name of Principal Investigator or Contact, address and phone number of the Principal Investigator or Contact, the Prescott Grant Program Category under which the project fits (see Section I.B. of this document), the project's objective(s), and a list of the Federal, non-Federal, and total costs of the project.

4. Project Description (10 page limit): The project description must be a clear statement of the proposed work and include specific objectives and performance measures and the expected significance. The description should demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of the need for the project and how the project builds upon any past or current work in the subject

area or any relevant work in related fields. Applicants should not assume that reviewers know the relative merits of the project.

The narrative project description must include each of the following elements in the order listed here:

- a. **Project Goals and Objectives:** Identify the Prescott Grant Program Category and/or regional funding priorities (listed in Section I.B.) relevant to the project. State expected project accomplishments and their significance to the marine mammal health, stranding response, and rehabilitation community. Objectives should be attainable within the specified time period and with the available monetary and human resources. Objectives should be simple, understandable, and as specific and quantitative as possible. Historic stranding data in the region of proposed activities should be used to assess season, species, and likelihood of future strandings. This data is critical in linking the proposed project objectives with the Prescott Grant Program's goals and regional funding priorities. Applicants are encouraged to provide stranding data and statistics by year and geographic area in sufficient detail to provide a regional context to the project.
- b. **Project Management:** Describe how the proposed project will be organized and managed, including financial management of the project. Only one Principal Investigator must be designated on each project. Other project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-Investigators. Organizations or individuals that support the project (e.g., network members contributing data or materials) should be referred to as Cooperators. If any portion of the project will be conducted through subcontracts, procurement guidance found in 15 CFR Part 24, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments," and 15 CFR Part 14, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Non-Profit, and Commercial Organizations" must be followed. Describe how provisions for competitive subcontracting will be met, if applicable. If the contractor has been identified, please provide a statement of their qualifications or background.
- c. **Project Description:** This is the scientific or technical plan of activities that will be accomplished to meet the proposed project's goals and objectives within the proposed award period. The statement of work must include detailed descriptions of activities, collaborators, milestones, and expected products resulting from the completed project. The project description should include:
 1. The specific project activities and how they relate to the project's goals and objectives.
 2. A list of the activities that will be conducted by Co-investigators, Cooperators, sub-contractors, volunteers, etc. Describe the oversight of

volunteers and how their staff time will be used to complete project activities. The Principal Investigator is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan.

3. A list of project milestones and a description of the specific activities and associated timelines necessary to meet them. Describe the timelines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2, etc.), rather than by specific dates. Please provide an explanation if dates are necessary (i.e., pupping season). Make sure the timelines are reasonable and reflect your overall project period.
 4. A description of the expected outcomes, results, or products, and how they directly relate to the Prescott Grant Program goals (those goals under your chosen Category A, B, or C, and National or Regional funding priorities).
 5. A description of how the project outcomes, results, or products will be disseminated to, or shared with, stranding network participants and other potential users. Describe how activities and results of the project will be shared outside the stranding network for education and outreach purposes. Indicate the method of information dissemination (e.g., print media, video, training manual, peer-reviewed publication, etc.).
- d. **Project Impacts:** Describe the potential impacts of the proposed project on the recovery and treatment of stranded marine mammals or the collection of data from living/dead stranded marine mammals for use in marine mammal health research. Identify any other potential project impacts, including environmental impacts.
 - e. **Project Performance Evaluation:** Specify the quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation criteria to determine the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals, objectives, and milestones.
 - f. **Need for Federal Assistance:** Explain the need for Federal government financial assistance to successfully complete project activities. List all sources of funding received from the Federal government (past or current) for this or a closely related project(s), with project titles and Federal funding amounts. List other sources of Federal funding being sought for this or similar projects.
 - g. **Federal, State, and Local Government Programs and Activities:** List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect and reference any corresponding documentation (i.e., permits, approvals, and environmental assessments) included in the application package.
 - h. **Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant:** Describe how government and non-government entities, particularly other members of the marine mammal health and stranding response community, will participate in the project and the nature of their participation.
5. **Organizational Summary (3 page limit):** Provide a summary of your facility and the role

your organization plays in the marine mammal stranding network. The summary should include: a map of your response area; response statistics (number of strandings/year); organizational overview (number of paid staff, volunteers, researchers, etc.); size and capacity of your facility; and a summary of your relationship with neighboring stranding network responders. Also include a financial overview of your facility, including what funds are available for the proposed work.

6. Appendices (15 page limit): Additional material may be provided, including tables charts, graphs, maps, photographs, slide shows, and other pictorial presentations.

7. Supporting Documentation (no page limit): The following supporting documentation is required for all proposals:

- a. Letter of eligibility: See requirements in Section III, Eligibility Information.
- b. Results of Previous Prescott Awards: If any Principal Investigator/Co-Investigator on the project has received support from the Prescott Grant Program in the past 3 years, the following information is required: 1) the NOAA award number, amount, and period of support; 2) the title of the project; 3) a brief summary of the results of the completed work (1-2 paragraphs); 4) any publications resulting from the award (copies are requested for documentation, if available); 5) a brief description of available data, samples, physical collections and other related research projects; and 6) if the current application is for renewed or continuing support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work. Do not submit copies of progress or final reports.
- c. Curriculum Vitae for Named Investigators (maximum 4 pages each): Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae are required from the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators, and named collaborators.
- d. Letters of Cooperation: Letters of cooperation between the Principal Investigator and all named participants in the project, describing and agreeing to the specific activities each participant would perform. A letter of cooperation is required from any organization that is supplying marine mammal samples/specimens for the proposed activities.
- e. Letters of Support: Letters of support include any endorsements or general letters of support for the project from other National Stranding Network participants (e.g., participants in adjacent geographical areas).
- f. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) documentation (if applicable). Applicants applying as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization must submit include a letter from the IRS verifying non-profit classification under the Internal Revenue Code and tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Code.
- g. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable). If indirect costs are included in the budget, the application should include a copy of the current, approved,

negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal government (see Section IV.D.2).

- h. Permits, authorizations, IACUC approvals, and/or complete environmental analyses (if applicable). Applicants requiring MMPA/ESA scientific research and enhancement permits must include a copy of the cover letter of their permit(s) or their request for such permit. Projects requiring IACUC review must include a copy of their IACUC approval or request for such approval.
- i. Additional Required Federal Forms. The following Federal forms must be submitted in the application: DOC form CD-346 (Applicant for Funding Assistance); DOC form CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying); and the SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) (if applicable).

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, October 5, 2010. Applications submitted through Grants.gov are automatically stamped with the date and time of submission and will be the basis of determining timeliness. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, there will be two automated email receipts sent to the application submitter with the date and time of submission. The first email confirms receipt of the application. The second email confirms that there are no errors with your application submission and it has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing. If both email confirmation receipts are not provided within two (2) days of application submission, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk and Sarah Howlett, at sarah.howlett@noaa.gov. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required elements have been appropriately submitted. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service for hard copy applications must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this program are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. For my information on a State's process under EO 12372, please visit the Office of Management and Budget's website at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost Rates: The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which the DOC will reimburse the recipient shall either be: 1) the lesser of the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award; or 2) the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by an oversight or cognizant Federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date. The Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs for the application. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount above the 25 percent level as cost sharing. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Because first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks, it is strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their central contractor registration may need to be renewed prior to submitting to Grants.gov. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan your time accordingly to avoid late submissions. For further information, please visit the Central Contractor Registration website (<http://www.ccr.gov>) The Grants.gov validation process for a submitted application can take up to 48 hours to complete (following submission through Grants.gov). Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. To ensure successful submission of an application, it is strongly recommended that a final and complete application is submitted 48 hours prior to the submission deadline.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals. This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Applications will be evaluated to determine if the project goals and objectives are: clear; relate to project activities; and relate to the Prescott Grant Program goals and regional funding priorities. Reviewers should consider: the likelihood of meeting project milestones and achieving anticipated results in

the stated time period; the contribution of potential outcomes, results, or products to the marine mammal stranding and rehabilitation communities; and the amount of collaboration with other stranding network participants. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 40%)

2. Technical/scientific merit: This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Proposals will be scored on their clear identification of goals and objectives and appropriate performance evaluation methods. Proposals should have sufficient information to enable Reviewers to provide a technical evaluation of the project. The evaluation will be based upon the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to obtaining productive and meaningful results. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 30%)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants: This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Project management will be evaluated based upon Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator(s), and other personnel documentation of related experience and qualifications. Other personnel include designated contractors, consultants, and Cooperators. The results of previous Prescott awards will be considered when evaluating applicant qualifications. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 10%)

4. Project costs: This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. The proposed costs and overall budget of the project will be evaluated according to the proposed work. The itemized costs and the overall budget must be justified and appropriately allocated. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 10%)

5. Outreach and education: This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. The proposal will be evaluated for how project outcomes, results, or products will be disseminated to stranding network participants, other potential users, and the general public. This may include education and outreach efforts (e.g., print media, curriculum development, videos, or websites) or information sharing within the scientific community (e.g., training manuals, facility sharing, and peer-reviewed journal publications). (Score = 1-100, Weight = 10%)

B. Review and Selection Process

B. Review and Selection Process

Review and selection of applications will take place in four steps: initial evaluation of the applications, technical review, merit review, and final selection by the Selecting Official (the Deputy Director, NMFS Office of Protected Resources).

1. Initial Evaluation of the Applications. Applications received in the NMFS Office of Protected Resources will be screened to ensure that they were received by the due date (see IV.C, Submission Dates and Times); provide for at least a 25 percent non-Federal cost share (see Section III.B.); and provide the letter of eligibility (see Section III.A. and Section IV.B.7.). Applications that pass the initial screening will be grouped based on the applicant chosen category (Category A, B, or C).

2. Technical Review. Each accepted application will undergo a technical review by participants in the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network or other qualified persons (scientists, researchers, stranding network participants from foreign countries, etc.). Technical reviewers will be asked to evaluate individual proposals based on the Prescott Grant Program National or Regional funding priorities identified by the applicant and the Evaluation Criteria (Section V.A). Each category of proposals will be reviewed by an appropriate technical review panel. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three individual reviewers. Category B and Category C applications will be reviewed and scored by individuals from a different NMFS region than the applicant to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Category A (research) applications may be reviewed by technical experts and scientists from the same NMFS region as the applicant. Any potential conflicts of interest will be avoided. There may be panel members present for the discussion that are from the same NMFS Regional Stranding Network. Each technical reviewer must certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the proposal(s) they are reviewing prior to their review. Each panelist will be required to identify potential conflicts of interest with proposals being reviewed by their panel. Reviewers with conflicts of interest will not be present during those proposal discussions. Scores and comments for proposals will be completed during the technical review meetings. Technical review scores will be used to numerically rank the proposals and provide comments on each proposal.

To determine the appropriateness of each proposal to the Prescott Grant Program's goals and/or National or Regional funding priorities, the technical reviewers will provide independent reviews using the weighted criteria outlined in Section V.A. An average weighted score will be generated from each review using the numeric score per criteria and the weights assigned to each criteria. Proposals with an average weighted score of less than 60 points will not move on to the merit review panel. These proposals will not be reviewed further.

3. Merit Review. National and Regional MMHSRP staff will conduct a merit review, in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Merit reviewers will determine recommendations for funding based upon: technical review scores and comments; application materials; stranding statistics per region; and equitable

distribution of funds among regions. Merit Reviewers will take into consideration the amount of collaboration with other stranding network participants when recommending proposals for funding. Proposals recommended for funding will be ranked. Equitable distribution will be determined using the best available data on episodic, anomalous or unusual stranding events; average annual strandings and mortalities; and sizes of marine mammal populations within each region. Merit reviewers will consider: the actual stranding statistics per region; stranding network effort or coverage per region; and the applicant's history with past funding from the Prescott Grant Program, including any delinquencies in report submission. Justifications will be given for any recommendations that fall outside the technical review ranking, equitable distribution order, or for any cost adjustments.

4. Final Selection. After the technical and merit reviews, the Program Office will prepare and submit recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official (the Deputy Director, NMFS Office of Protected Resources). The Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which proposals will be funded based on recommendations of the merit review panel as well as policy considerations such as costs, geographical distribution, financial need, duplication with other Federally funded projects, and equitable distribution of funds among the NMFS regions.

C. Selection Factors

The merit review panel shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. A Federal Program Officer may first make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order, unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds: a. Geographically; b. By type of institutions; c. By type of partners; d. By research areas; e. By project types.
3. Duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.
5. Applicant's prior award performance (including report submission).
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.

Therefore, the highest scoring proposals may not necessarily be selected for an award.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the four months following the proposal due date given in this announcement. Funding should begin during summer 2011 for most approved projects, subject to the availability of funds. Projects should

not be expected to begin prior to August 1, 2011, unless otherwise directed by the Federal Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The final, exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and a Federal Program Officer. A cooperative agreement will be utilized if the proposed work entails substantial involvement between the applicant and NMFS. The final determination of the funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be made by the NOAA Grants Management Division.

Applicants should not initiate any project in expectation of Federal funding until they receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA Grants Officer. After the NOAA Grants Management Division has awarded successful applicants, a Federal Program Officer will notify unsuccessful applicants. Comments and scores from the Technical Review panel will be provided to unsuccessful applicants. Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of 12 months and will then be destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements - The DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696) are applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability- In no event will NOAA or the DOC be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

NEPA- NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA Federal Funding Opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 and the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA implementing regulations.

Applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist. Applicants may be asked to assist NOAA in the drafting of an EA, if NOAA determines one is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their project. Failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

C. Reporting

Applicants awarded a grant or cooperative agreement for a project must:

1. Manage the day-to-day operations of the project. The applicant must be responsible for the performance of all activities for which funds are granted and for the satisfaction of all administrative and managerial conditions imposed by the award.
2. Keep sufficient records to document any costs incurred under the award. Access to these records must be given for audit and examination by the Secretary of Commerce, the Comptroller General of the United States, or their authorized representatives. Financial status reports (SF- 425) must be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division in accordance with the award conditions.
3. Submit financial and performance (technical) reports on time. All financial reports shall be submitted electronically via NOAA Grants Online to the NOAA Grants Officer. Performance reports should be submitted via NOAA Grants Online to the Prescott Grant Program Office every six months, beginning from the project start date indicated on the SF-424. Reports must contain a description of activities conducted in the six-month period. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration. The final report must describe the project, including an evaluation of the work performed and the results and benefits. The final report must have sufficient detail to enable us to assess the success of the completed project.
Based on the location of the projected work, NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinators or MMHSRP staff will serve as Technical Monitors to advise the Program Officer. For projects taking place in more than one region, the Technical Monitor will be MMHSRP Headquarters staff. As part of the review of performance and final reports, the Technical Monitors may request a more detailed accounting of expenditures by cost category, including in-kind or matching costs, on a case-by-case basis.
4. In addition, we request that awardees submit any publications printed with award funds (e.g., manuals, surveys, etc.) to the NMFS Federal Program Officer for dissemination to the public. Publications may be submitted either as three hard copies or in an electronic version. Further guidance regarding performance reports are available on the Prescott Grant Program website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/proposals/report.htm>.

VII. Agency Contacts

The points of contact are: Michelle Ordone and Sarah Howlett, Prescott Grant Program, NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources (F/PR), 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13620, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Phone: (301) 713-2322; or e-mail at Michelle.Ordone@noaa.gov or Sarah.Howlett@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information