

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
NOAA COASTAL OCEAN PROGRAM GRANTS PROPOSAL APPLICATION
PACKAGE
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0384

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

Beginning in late FY1998, the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Ocean Service (NOS), Coastal Ocean Program (COP) was able to provide direct financial assistance in the form of discretionary research grants and cooperative agreements under its own program for the management of coastal ecosystems. COP financial assistance had been previously provided to non-profit organizations and educational institutions through joint participation in the Sea Grant omnibus vehicle.

The COP is part of a unique federal-academic partnership designed to provide predictive capability for managing coastal ecosystems. Under the authority of [33 U.S.C. Section 1442](#), "Research program respecting possible long-range effects of pollution, overfishing, and man-induced changes of ocean ecosystems", COP supports research on critical issues associated with the Nation's estuaries, coastal waters and the Great Lakes, and translates its finding into accessible information for coastal managers, planners, lawmakers and the public. COP's projects are multi-disciplinary, large in scale and long in duration (usually three to five years). Grants monies are available for related activities. Multi-year funding will be funded incrementally.

Revision: Also now included in the request is the NOAA Restore Act Science Program (RASP). This program is housed in NOAA/NOS/NCCOS and provides direct financial assistance through grants and cooperative agreements for research, observation, and monitoring to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter-fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA was authorized to establish and administer the Program, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, by the [Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies \(RESTORE\) of the Gulf States Act of 2012](#) (Pub. L. 112- 141, section 1604). Identified in the RESTORE Act as the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program, the Program is commonly known as the NOAA Restore Act Science Program.

All potential NOAA COP and RASP grant recipients are required to submit the Standard Forms used by NOAA for Federal grants as follows: SF-424; the SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs; the SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs; the CD-511 and 512 Certifications and the SF-LLL (lobbying form) if applicable.

At the time of application, COP and RASP grant applicants will be asked to include a COP Project Summary (Abstract) Form, Current and Pending Form and a Key Contacts Form in addition to the standard application requirements for Federal grants. Copies of these proposed forms are included in this request. The main purpose of this information collection is to enable COP and RASP to provide summaries of each proposed project, the key applicant contact information and their current and pending Federal funding. The information gathered will enable COP and RASP to properly and quickly evaluate proposals in a collaborative environment with its partner agencies.

COP grant recipients will also be required to file COP Annual Progress Reports and a COP Project Final Report. RASP grant recipients will be required to file RASP Semi-Annual Progress Reports and a COP Project Final Report. The proposed formats are included in this request. The COP Annual Progress Report and the COP Project Final Report provide a consistent, detailed format to grantees.

Project Summary (Abstract) Form:

The Project Summary (Abstract) Form provided at time of application includes a statement of objectives, methods to be employed and the significance of the proposed activity to the advancement of knowledge or education. This information collection shall not be more than one page in length and must be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words.

Current and Pending Federal Funding Form:

The Current and Pending Federal Funding Form provided at the time of application describes all current and pending federal financial/funding support for all principal and co-investigators, including unfunded collaborators making a substantial contribution to the research. Continuing grants are also included. This information allows merit reviewers and Federal Program Managers to determine the capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects.

Key Contacts Form:

The Key Contacts form provides the merit reviews and Federal Program Managers with a one page reference for all Key personnel involved in the application and proposal process for each applicant. The form, submitted with the application, is used to identify the appropriate personnel Federal Program Managers need to communicate with, after the competitive review process is complete.

Reporting Requirements:

Consistency in reporting requirements for competitive research grant programs is desirable and this is behind the COP and RASP efforts in proposing a standardized

format/form. In accordance with current OMB guidance recipients are responsible for managing and monitoring each project, program, sub-award, function or activity supported by an award. The Federal awarding agency prescribes the frequency with which the performance reports shall be submitted, which typically shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or less frequently than annually. A final report will be required upon expiration or termination of grant support.

Format – Annual Performance Report:

The format chosen provides the minimum information required by this program to evaluate the project’s progress with respect to its goals and objectives, schedule for accomplishments, and application to resource management. It has been determined that with respect to research, semi-annual reports are an unnecessary reporting burden for established programs, especially for large multi-investigator projects typical of the COP. The request for annual performance reports has been accepted and approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division for COP-sponsored grants or cooperative agreements.

Format-Semi-Annual Report:

The format chosen provides the minimum information required by this program to evaluate the project’s progress with respect to its goals and objectives, schedule for accomplishments, and application to resource management. It has been determined that semi-annual progress reporting is necessary for newly established programs.

Format – Final Report:

The use of the Project Final Report format provides the level of detail required to evaluate the effort invested by investigators and staff on project management; any actual accomplishments and research findings; and what goals and objectives were attained.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used.

Project Summary (Abstract) Form:

The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly by the reviewing officials in the competitive process. It is submitted at time of application.

Current and Pending Federal Funding Form:

The current and pending form is used by Federal Program Managers and merit reviewers to evaluate and determine the capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects. It is submitted at time of application.

Key Contacts Form:

The key contacts form is used to identify the appropriate personnel Federal Program Managers need to communicate with after the competitive review process is complete.

Semi-Annual Report:

Use of the format will provide RASP with the necessary information required to evaluate performance of the newly established program. A copy of the semi-annual progress report is maintained in the RASP Program Information File and it is electronically transmitted to the Grants Management Division (GMD) through the NOAA Grants On Line system.

Annual Report:

For the proposed progress report format, the first section is taken from the COP-implementation plan and has some advantages in that previously-funded investigators will be familiar with the format. Use of this format will provide COP with the necessary information required to evaluate performance for the purpose of renewal of research grants. Since COP's grants are typically three to five years in duration, one annual report will be requested at the end of each year funded. A copy of the annual progress report is maintained in the COP Program Information File and it is electronically transmitted to the Grants Management Division (GMD) through the NOAA Grants On Line system.

Final Report:

Final reports are reviewed to determine if any information products were delivered by the grantee. In addition, the final report is used as a management tool by program managers to determine recipient compliance and performance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

NOAA will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

There is Web availability of the grant application kit on the NCCOS's home page at: <https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/>. The Web site offers the public the ability to print all COP and RASP required forms with accompanying instructions from the internet. Applicants are able to electronically submit grant applications at: www.grants.gov and the progress reports can be submitted electronically by those recipients having electronic access at: <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/home/Login/verifyLogin.do>.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

No duplication has been identified. The final report required for each grant award as part of the standard Federal grant award conditions does not have a government-wide standard format (although the federal government grant-making programs have been making periodic efforts to develop one). The format COP developed is similar to the National Science Foundation (NSF format); however, each funded grant award is required to report progress. No duplication is performed since each award has different objectives to meet.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Not applicable.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

Summaries are submitted only at the time of application and efficient review of the proposals is not possible without these documents. If annual and final reports are not submitted, monitoring of grant performance would be much more difficult and there would be less benefit to other professionals from the projects.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

N/A.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and the data elements to be recorded, disclosed or reported.

A Federal Register Notice published on March 8, 2016 (81 FR 12078) solicited public comments on this submission. No comments were received.

A separate solicitation of comments on the accuracy of the burden and clarity of instructions was sent to five grantees. One said that she had no comment at this time; another said that the group to which the request was distributed had no comments.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts are provided (other than grant monies).

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

As stated on the forms, grant files are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA). However, the forms also state, unpublished research results shall not be published without prior permission from the recipient.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

There are no sensitive questions.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

Requirement	# of Annual Respondents	# of Responses per Respondent	Total Responses	Average Time per Response	Total Annual Response Time (Hours)
Summary	300	1	300	30 minutes	150
Current and Pending	300	1	300	30 minutes	150
Key Contacts	300	1	300	30 minutes	150
Annual Report	50	1	50	5 hours	250
Semi-Annual Report	50	2	100	5 hours	500
Final Report	50	1	50	10 hours	500
TOTALS	1050		1,100		1700

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection.

No capital expenditures are required.

In the research grant environment, applicants have staff dedicated to the submission of proposals, including clerical support. Both time and dollar costs are charged to grantors under the general and administrative overhead line item on the proposal budget. This includes hours spent for preparation of the other reports.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government.

The total annualized cost burden to the Government for conducting the collection and handling the information submitted is estimated at \$4,749.00. The annualized total cost is estimated as follows:

1. Project summary review 5 minutes = $5/60 \times 200 \times \$38.00$ per hour = \$633
2. Key Contacts review 5 minutes = $5/60 \times 200 \times \$38.00$ per hour = \$633
3. Current and Pending review 5 minutes = $5/60 \times 200 \times \$38.00$ per hour = \$633
4. Annual Progress report review 22.5 minutes = $22.5/60 \times 50 \times \38.00 per hour = \$712.50
5. Final Progress report review 22.5 minutes = $22.5/60 \times 50 \times \38.00 per hour = \$712.50.
6. Semi-Annual Progress report review 22.5 minutes = $22.5/60 \times 100 \times \38.00 per hour = \$1,425.

Total = \$4,749.00.

15. Explain the reason for any program changes or adjustments.

Program Change

RASP is now incorporated into the current request. Semi-Annual Progress Reports are consistent with NOAA GMD practices and recommended for newly established programs. The information gathered will enable RASP to properly and quickly evaluate progress of each grant.

The Semi-Annual form will be submitted by 50 applicants with a total burden for each being 10 hours; total of 100 responses; and 500 hours added to the previous annual totals.

Adjustments

There was an addition of 150 hours due to corrected response and burden estimates.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publications.

Not applicable. Grants products may be published, but not applications or reports.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reason why display would be inappropriate.

Not applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

Not applicable.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.