



# WEATHER PROGRAM OFFICE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

### **FY21 WPO Notice of Funding Opportunity At-a-Glance**

WPO is committed to facilitating an efficient, straightforward, and inclusive grants application process. Through surveys, in-person discussions, email, and more, we continually collect feedback about the process to incorporate in the development of a new competition schedule. WPO recognizes that the grants process can be difficult, time-intensive, and potentially confusing at times for all parties, including applicants, institutions, reviewers, and grants management teams. The Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21 NOFO) was developed with this in mind. For more information, visit [owaq.noaa.gov/nofo](http://owaq.noaa.gov/nofo) or email us as [oar.wpo.competitions@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.wpo.competitions@noaa.gov).

#### Competitions

The FY21 WPO NOFO consists of the following three competitions. Additional details for each program may be found in the NOFO.

1. Joint Technology Transfer Initiative (JTTI)
2. Next-Generation Weather and Water Observation Systems
3. Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBES)

#### Competition Deadlines

For FY21, the competition dates and deadlines are consistent for each of the three WPO competitions:

LOI Deadline - September 22, 2020

Proposal Deadline - November 18, 2020

#### Submitting Multiple Proposals

Applicants are allowed to submit multiple proposals to multiple competitions, but they must be wholly different projects. Do not submit duplicate applications to different competitions; only the first one received will be eligible for review. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals early, especially if submitting multiple proposals. Be aware that institutional grants services representatives may require additional time to process applications if a large number are submitted from the same institution.

#### Project Start Dates

If your proposal is selected for funding, the project will begin on August 1, 2021.

#### Letters of Intent

Pre-application Letters of Intent (LOI) are strongly encouraged for all programs. Each LOI will be reviewed and returned to the potential applicant with recommendations to proceed with a full proposal, to not proceed with a full proposal, or adjust the project plans to ensure applications are aligned with

program objectives. LOIs must be submitted by 5 p.m. ET on September 22, 2020, via email to [oar.wpo.competitions@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.wpo.competitions@noaa.gov).

### NOAA Testbed Information

Although there are no High-Impact Weather Testbed program competitions in FY21, applicants are encouraged to evaluate their project output in a NOAA testbed or proving ground if it is beneficial to their research, development, and eventual transition. Applicants are expected to identify and work with the appropriate Testbed Manager(s) beginning at an early stage to prepare the experiment. The full proposal should include a NOAA Collaborator Acknowledgement Form completed and signed by the relevant Testbed Manager.

### NOAA Readiness Levels

NOAA uses Readiness Levels (RLs) to broadly classify the maturity of its projects. The numerical RL scale from 1 to 9 is designed to track project maturity across the progressive spectrum from research to development to demonstration to deployment. Applicants are expected to estimate their proposed project's RL at project start and identify its intended RL upon completion. Most commonly, WPO projects fall between RL4 and RL7 and may progress to RL8 (ready for transition to operations or applications). The project is considered at RL9 only once it is adopted into 24/7 operations at NWS or elsewhere after project completion.

RLs are defined in the context of NOAA's overall process for transitioning funded research into operations, commercialization, or other applications in NOAA's Policy on Research and Development Transitions described in NOAA Administrative Order 216-105B and in Appendix A. Additional information can be found in the Procedural Handbook for NOAA's Policy on Research & Development Transitions at [https://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative\\_orders/chapter\\_216/Handbook\\_NAO216-105B\\_03-21-17.pdf](https://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/Handbook_NAO216-105B_03-21-17.pdf).

### Research Transition (R2X) Information

While WPO may not directly fund research transition (R2X) activities (i.e., progressing from Readiness Level 8 to 9) involving the transition of research and development output to National Weather Service (NWS) or other operations, the funded projects may work with operational collaborators to plan for an eventual transition if an operational center agrees. Per NOAA policy, PIs will be expected to complete a written research-to-operations (R2O) transition plan in coordination with an assigned NWS Point-of-Contact after the project begins, if the project is intended to surpass Readiness Level 4 and/or transition to NWS operations after the award ends. More information on transition plans will be provided after award selections are made.

### Proposal Scoring Criteria

Independent peer reviewers will score each application based on the following criteria, for a total of 100 possible points:

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to Program Goals (30 points)
2. Technical/Scientific Merit (35 points)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15 points)
4. Project Costs (10 points)
5. Outreach, Education, Diversity, and Inclusion (10 points)

#### Information for Federal Applicants

Federal applicants may not submit proposals as part of this funding opportunity. They may only serve as an unfunded co-PI, co-I, or collaborator and must partner with an external, non-NOAA institution. Non-NOAA federal institutions are ineligible to receive any funding through this opportunity. Salaries for federal employees and federal contractors directly performing work for a federal NOAA institution are ineligible for this funding opportunity. Federal NOAA collaborators may request funding for infrastructure or project-critical travel (excluding conference and workshop travel). No more than 20% of the total project cost may apply to federal costs. Any federal NOAA collaborator requesting funding must attach a letter outlining the request and associated cost breakdown. Federal collaborators not requesting funding should complete and sign the NOAA Collaborator Acknowledgment Form, to be submitted with the proposal, in lieu of a letter of support.

#### Student Opportunities

WPO recognizes that many proposed projects provide opportunities for students. The FY21 NOFO schedule is intended to allow investigators a chance to hire students during the spring recruitment season rather than waiting until the summer, when many students are already committed. Applicants are encouraged to promote the education and field experience of undergraduate and graduate students and consider leveraging educational scholarship or internship opportunities.

#### Diversity and Inclusion

NOAA, OAR, and WPO strongly encourage applicants and awardees to support the principles of diversity and inclusion when writing their proposals and performing their work. Applicants are expected to include in their proposal information on if and how their proposed project supports a diverse workforce and inclusive research and development opportunities. When writing the proposal, applicants are encouraged to consider the diversity of their team, potential partnerships with institutions of underrepresented populations, educational and outreach programs, and involvement with other initiatives that build the capacity of and materially foster a diverse and inclusive research team and environment.

#### Government Shutdown Guidance

In the event of a lapse in government appropriations, assume that there is no change to the regularly-scheduled deadlines unless a revised deadline has been announced. Any deadline revisions will be announced promptly and clearly but may not occur until after the shutdown ends.

#### Waiting until the Deadline

With all WPO competitions using the same deadline, there is potential for a large number of submissions in a short period of time. Applicants from large institutions are encouraged to consider potential strain on their institution's grants representative and complete their submission packages early to avoid backlogs and potential delays near the deadline(s).

Program Contacts

JTTI: Dr. Chandra Kondragunta (chandra.kondragunta@noaa.gov; 301-734-1034)

Observations Program: Dr. Mark Vincent (mark.vincent@noaa.gov; 301-734-1026)

SBES: Dr. Gina Eosco (gina.eosco@noaa.gov; 301-734-1068)

General NOFO Questions: oar.wpo.competitions@noaa.gov,

or Matthew Mahalik (matthew.mahalik@noaa.gov; 301-734-1065)