

NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grants – discussion by Rocky Lopes, February 1, 2018

Key reminder: second round of NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grant Applications are due February 23, 2018 (or sooner) to nws.tsunamigrants@noaa.gov.

* Great job on interpreting the draft 2018-2023 NTHMP Strategic Plan. Lots of creative applications of goals and strategies.

* Great work as well on understanding and applying the "allowable grant activities" chart. For the first time, no one asked for funding that is disallowed. A few people asked for some more things than a limit was placed, but all-in-all, it appears that the requests were in line with what was allowed.

* Remember that effective with FY18 grant applications, we do not allow tasks for positions like "Tsunami Specialist" -- while we do allow a provision to hire staff, hours for staff must be assigned to specific tasks that the person will execute and/or supervise.

* If you are requesting staff time that total more than 2,080 hours (1 FTE), you must justify in the Budget Explanation why you need more than 1 FTE position. This applies to everyone -- even if we have funded more than 1 FTE to your program in past grants. Justification should relate to your actual tsunami risk.

* \$7.39M was requested when the first round of all grant applications was submitted and tabulated. We anticipate that we will have \$6M to recommend for funding, so we're already "oversubscribed". Fair warning that some requests will not be able to be recommended for funding since there is insufficient funds.

* We expect what will be submitted for Round 2 will be different from what was submitted for Round 1 when you refine your entries, confirm subcommittee endorsements, and add allowable travel for Powell Center Workshops and TWC training. You may ask for more than you asked for in Round 1, but remember -- Round 1 totals were already oversubscribed, so if you ask for more for something, consider what else you may be able to reduce or give up.

* IntraNOAA transfer of funds for four priority DEMs as identified by the MMS comes off the top of the \$6M funding level. Then priority is given to: a) funding travel for CC members to NTHMP meetings; and b) subcommittee endorsed activities. As it looks now, about \$4.6M may be available for the remaining states / territories / regions activities. Anticipate that we may not be in the position to recommend funding for everything proposed. Do your best work to "scrub" your cost estimates and proposed tasks. Can you really accomplish everything you proposed in one year?

* These are NOT two-year grants. Completion dates in the Project Narrative should all be 8/31/2019. We allow a two-year performance period to account for slippage on one or two tasks upon approval from my office and to avoid the hassle of requesting a no-cost extension.

* Past performance in meeting deliverables within one year are being closely evaluated, and if there is a track record of missing deliverables or long delays not due to unavoidable circumstances, then that will be taken into account when it comes to the merit review.

* Also regarding past performance, if there is a history and frequency of formal budget reprogramming (more than once per grant excepting unforeseen circumstances like getting struck by two Cat 4 hurricanes within two weeks), then that will also be taken into account during merit review.

* Believe it or not, there is evidence that at least four of 12 partners did not read the FY18 Grant Guidance. Errors were numerous and could have been avoided if the applicant read and followed the Grant Guidance -- especially that funding a single "tsunami specialist" position as a Task in the grant is not allowed. All hours for workers must be allocated to specific tasks. The NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grants are not an employment program or a program to keep researchers and students employed at universities.

* Large expenses without cost breakdowns (either in the budget spreadsheet or in the budget explanation) will not likely pass muster when it comes time for Federal Review. Do not include anything that has the appearance of a "slush fund." Example, "\$800 for a 'lot' of office supplies."

* Remember when sending the formal grant pre-application, send it to:
nws.tsunamigrants@noaa.gov.

WHAT IS DUE BY FEBRUARY 23, 2018:

Send these documents in their native format (do not convert to PDF):

- ** Project Narrative
- ** Budget Spreadsheets (prime and subawards)
- ** Budget Explanation
- ** Forced-choice priority ranking
- ** any NICRA(s) that may have changed.
- ** CVs or resumes of all grant-funded personnel (prime AND subawards)
- ** NEPA Statement
- ** Partner Endorsement form
- ** If requesting equipment at \$5,000 or more, a lease -vs-purchase analysis is also required. If a lease is not available, say that.