NOAA's Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal and Restoring Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Funding Opportunities

Applicant Webinar Transcript
August 2023

Slide 1 [00:00]
Hello and welcome to our webinar about NOAA's 2nd Round of Fish Passage Funding Opportunities supported through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

I'm Janine Harris, the Competition Manager for the *Restoring Tribal Fish Passage through Barrier Removal* competition. And Melanie Gange, the Competition Manager for the *Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal* competition, is here as well to participate in this presentation.

During this presentation, we'll start with an overview of the two funding opportunities, then present frequently asked questions about the opportunities.

Slide 2 [00:40]
The full funding opportunities can be downloaded from Grants.gov. If you haven't accessed them yet, you can download a PDF from the Grants.gov posting, under the "Related Documents" tab using the opportunity numbers listed on this slide.

I will refer to the *NOAA's Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal* opportunity as the "National Fish Passage" competition and the *Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal* opportunity as "Tribal Fish Passage."

Slide 3 [01:11]
For this presentation, I will be highlighting the most pertinent information to help you decide whether these opportunities are appropriate for your organization or project. These numbers listed here on the slide correspond to the actual section headers in the funding opportunities so you can cross-reference them when reading through the documents.

Slide 4 [01:34]
For the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity, we anticipate approximately $175 million will be available to support selected awards. The deadline for proposal submission is 11:59pm eastern time on October 16, 2023.

For the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity, we anticipate approximately $85 million will be available to support selected projects. The deadline for proposal submission is 11:59pm eastern time on November 8, 2023.

NOAA can provide assistance to all applicants to help them best understand which funding opportunities may be most appropriate for their project. Indian tribes are eligible to apply to both funding opportunities. Because Indian tribes, including Alaska Native Corporations, are eligible to apply to both opportunities, we've marked slides with an orange "Difference" marker or a green "Compare" marker, as you can see on this slide. This way, you can easily return to the slides that will help you compare and contrast the two opportunities.

Slide 5 [02:44]
You will notice similarities between these funding opportunities. The parallels are intentional to make it easier on the applicant to understand NOAA's definitions and objectives for fish passage.

I will be clear where there are differences for you to note between these funding opportunities– such as in the Program Objective section.

Section I of the funding opportunities outlines these program objectives and priorities.

The objective of the *National Fish Passage* competition is to support fish passage for native migratory and sea-run fish in coastal ecosystems, including the Great Lakes. Projects selected through this funding opportunity will result in the locally-led removal of dams and other in-stream barriers to fish passage.

Slide 6 [03:34]
The objective for the *Tribal Fish Passage* competition is to provide federal financial and technical assistance to Indian tribes and organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements to remove barriers to fish passage.

Funding will be used for fish passage that rebuilds productive and sustainable fisheries, contributes to the recovery and conservation of threatened and endangered species, enhances watershed health, promotes resilient ecosystems and communities, and increases tribal capacity to participate in fish passage barrier removal efforts while improving tribal commercial, recreational, subsistence and cultural practice opportunities.

Slide 7 [04:19]
For both competitions, additional details about our Program Objective are provided in the same Section 1.A. There, the funding opportunity states that applications should describe how the proposed fish passage will address one of these species emphasis areas. These are **not** listed in any order of importance, but I will describe them in the order they are outlined in the funding opportunities.

1: Contribute to the recovery of threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). You may hear me refer to these as "Listed Species." Not all listed species fall under NOAA's jurisdiction, so please refer to the definition of native migratory and sea-run fish.

2: Sustain or help rebuild fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. You may hear me refer to these as " Managed Species." These projects include benefits to Essential Fish Habitat for recreationally and commercially important species and their prey.

3: Improve habitat function in support of native fish species of the Great Lakes.

or

4: Enhance the sustainability of saltwater recreational fisheries by the restoration of habitat that supports the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy and Implementation Plans.

This slide includes a link to our Program Priorities website, where you can find additional weblinks about these species that are emphasized.

Slide 8 [05:52]
We receive a lot of questions about Great Lakes native migratory species. While not an exhaustive list, this is a list of some of the *native migratory* fish species of the Great Lakes.

Also, for clarification, eligible applicants for Great Lakes projects must propose work within one of the eight U.S. Great Lakes states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota) within the Great Lakes basin.

Slide 9 [06:25]
The most competitive projects will also enhance community resilience, including providing resilience to extreme weather events and climate hazards, and providing benefits to tribal and underserved communities. We are also encouraging projects that support hydroelectric license surrender and that remove dams that are no longer economically viable.

This slide includes a link to additional resources on this topic that can be found on our Program Priorities webpage.

Slide 10 [06:57]
Our Program Objective section also describes the kinds of proposed activities for these funding opportunities. This list includes project development and feasibility studies, engineering and design, permitting, on-the-ground fish passage restoration, pre- and post-removal implementation monitoring, (effectiveness monitoring that contributes to tribal capacity building may be eligible for funding in the *Tribal Fish Passage* competition), stakeholder engagement, education and outreach, and building the capacity of new and existing restoration partners.

The *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity will also **specifically** support building tribal organizational capacity to participate in developing current and future fish passage projects.

Applicants may apply for funding to support one or more of these activities. Proposals may include multiple locations throughout a watershed or other geographic area, and should demonstrate how multiple locations collectively contribute to priorities within the watershed or geographic region.

Slide 11 [08:07]
Section I also contains some definitions that can be used to ensure that one of these funding opportunities is appropriate for the work you plan to do. I'll walk through some of those definitions for you here.

The first definition is for fish passage. Fish passage is defined as the ability of fish to move freely between habitats they rely on for food, growth, reproduction, and other needs. Fish passage projects improve the movement of fish within and between their spawning, rearing, and adult habitats by modifying or removing dams, culverts, and other barriers that restrict their migration.

For these opportunities, fish passage means native migratory or sea-run fish can move through the barrier site under their own power, at multiple life stages, without delay, otherwise known as "volitional passage."

Some partners may be interested in applying for projects outside of the Notice of Funding Opportunity's definition of fish passage, such as projects that involve transporting fish around a barrier. These projects are eligible to apply. However, these projects would likely not score well in this funding opportunity unless the project can show substantial connection to the program priorities described in the funding opportunity. For all applications, it is important to outline how the project provides lasting benefits with high chances of long term success.

Slide 12 [09:37]
We also define Native Migratory or Sea-run Fish. Target fish species under this funding opportunity are those native species that spend a portion of their lives in rivers and/or ponds and a portion in the ocean, estuaries or Great Lakes.

Species of migratory fish include salmon, steelhead trout, shad, river herring, American eel, and sturgeon, among others. These species migrate to their spawning and rearing habitats to reproduce and may be referred to as anadromous, sea-run, diadromous, catadromous, or potadromous, depending on where they begin and end their migration. Native migratory or sea-run fish will be abbreviated as "migratory fish" in these funding opportunities.

Slide 13 [10:25]
We also describe what we mean by in-stream barriers to fish passage. An in-stream barrier is any blockage that prevents or reduces the ability of migratory fish to move where needed to survive and complete their life cycle. These funding opportunities focus on physical barriers, such as dams and culverts.

Environmental barriers, such as excess sediment, poor water quality, and temperature or flow variations may be addressed in concert with physical barriers. Barriers may be permanent or temporary, for one or more life stages of migratory fish.

Slide 14 [11:03]
Some of our definitions should also be helpful as you describe your project outcomes.

Our definition for underserved communities comes from Executive Order 13985, which can be found at the link on the slide. This term refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

Slide 15 [11:36]
The funding opportunities also define Indigenous Knowledge. The definition is from the 2023 *NOAA Guidance and Best Practices for Engaging and Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge in Decision-Making*. This term refers to the cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment.

We have added this definition to our funding opportunities to recognize the importance of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge for understanding the environment, adapting to environmental change, and mitigating negative environmental impacts.

This slide includes a link to the 2023 *NOAA Guidance and Best Practices for Engaging and Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge in Decision-Making,* which provides some definitions and guidance for NOAA.

Slide 16 [12:33]
This term, meaningful engagement, refers to communities having an opportunity to be an integral part of the visioning, decision-making, or leadership for activities that may affect their environment and/or health and wellbeing. Meaningful engagement relies on the involvement of those potentially affected in a manner that builds trust and addresses barriers to community participation to ensure that the scope of the activities is inclusive of the priorities and needs of communities and that the benefits of the activities flow back to the community.

This slide includes a link to additional resources on this topic.

Slide 17 [13:16]
I'm now going to move to Section 1.B in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, which is the Program Priorities. The blue priorities here are unique to the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity. Successful proposals in this competition, the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity, will be those that meet the evaluation criteria (Section V.A) most strongly,

including those criteria related to the program priorities described here. We recommend that applicants look at the Evaluation Criteria (Section V.A) and Program Priorities in parallel when developing proposals.

There are 4 priorities for the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity.

The first one we listed is: Achieving measurable and lasting benefits for migratory fish populations. NOAA prioritizes work that will achieve measurable, sustainable, and lasting benefits for migratory fish populations. Proposals that focus on removal of barriers will receive highest priority (for example, dam removals will receive higher priority than installation of structures that require operations and maintenance, such as fish ladders).

The second priority listed is: Enhancing community resilience to climate hazards and providing other co-benefits. Applicants should describe how the proposed fish passage will benefit human populations within or near the project site(s), and how these actions will reduce vulnerability to the climate hazards that are most threatening to the local communities. Applicants may also describe how the proposed work will enhance the ability to plan and prepare for adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards.

The third priority listed is: Fostering regionally important habitat restoration. This solicitation will fund restoration actions that demonstrate high priority within a defined geographic region. Applicants should refer to watershed plans, resiliency plans, or other fishery-related strategic planning, conservation, or management documents, as appropriate, to support the importance of the proposed work. Proposals should identify how the fish passage aligns with relevant planning documents, and if the proposed actions are identified and ranked highly within a prioritized list of restoration needs within the defined geographic area.

The final priority is: Providing benefit to and engaging with underserved communities, including through partnerships with Indian tribes. NOAA is committed to the goals of advancing equity and support for underserved communities. Applicants should identify if the project is located within tribal or underserved communities and/or whether a portion of the resilience benefits from the proposed project will flow to tribal or underserved communities.

Slide 18 [16:10]
There are also 4 priorities for the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity. The blue priorities here are unique to the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity. Applicants should address at least one of the following program priorities in your proposals:

The first is: Achieving measurable and lasting benefits for migratory fish populations. NOAA prioritizes proposed work that will achieve measurable, sustainable, and lasting benefits for migratory fish populations. Proposals that focus on removal of barriers will receive highest priority (dam removals will receive higher priority than installation of structures that require operations and maintenance, such as fish ladders).

The second priority is: Enhancing community resilience to extreme weather and climate hazards and providing other co-benefits. Applicants should describe how the proposed fish passage will benefit human populations within or near the project site(s), and how these actions will reduce vulnerability to the climate hazards that are most threatening to the local communities. Applicants may also describe how the proposed work will enhance the ability to plan and prepare for adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards.

The third priority is: Fostering tribally important barrier removal efforts that benefit migratory fish. This solicitation will fund restoration of habitats that improve migratory fish populations important to tribes, including usual and accustomed areas, habitat important for enhancing tribal treaty reserved fishing rights or native subsistence fishing, and tribal trust fishing opportunities. Applicants should reference tribal knowledge, watershed plans, resiliency plans, or other fishery-related strategic planning, conservation, or management documents to show the tribal importance of the proposed work.

The final priority is: Increasing tribal organizational fish passage capacity to support tribes in their role as managers and stewards of tribal trust resources for cultural, spiritual, economic, subsistence, and recreational purposes. Proposals may include activities that build tribal capacity to participate in the fish passage project development process, including reviewing project locations, reviewing design plans, conducting field assessments, providing tribal knowledge for fish passage projects, and managing multi-faceted fish passage project design and construction.

An important note here is that while we're interested in knowing if a project is a tribal priority, which may be determined through the use of tribal knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge, NOAA is not collecting this knowledge or asking for it in our applications. We want to understand if tribal knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge are included in the planning for the proposed work.

Slide 19 [19:04]
Section II of the funding opportunities describe the available funding and award structure.

NOAA anticipates that up to $175 million will be available for the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity. We will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $1 million or more than $20 million over the award period.

NOAA anticipates that up to $85 million will be available for the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity. We will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $300,000 or more than $12 million.

For both competitions, your request may be spread across more than one year. So, the amount you request for your project in the first year can be less than the lowest amount here (less than $300,000 in the *Tribal Fish Passage* opportunity, for example), as long as your total request for the full award period is at least that lowest amount.

For both competitions, we recommend a 3-year award period. Any single application that is awarded the maximum allowed request should have significant ecological impact, detailed and credible cost estimates, and construction readiness.

Slide 20 [20:27]
Section III of the funding opportunities deals with eligibility.

For the National Fish Passage funding opportunity, eligible applicant types include: institutions of higher education; non-profit and for-profit organizations; U.S. territories; and state, local, and Native American tribal governments. Applicants must propose work in areas that benefit migratory fish as defined in the Program Objectives (Section I.A).

Applications from federal agencies, employees of federal agencies, or individuals will not be considered, but these entities are strongly encouraged to work with applicants who are eligible to apply. This is true for the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity as well.

Slide 21 [21:20]
For the *Tribal Fish Passage* competition, eligible applicants are Indian tribes (U.S. federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native Corporations, as defined in the Indian Self Determination Act - 25 US code section 5304 subpart e) and organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements. These could be tribal commissions, tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts and tribal cooperatives, for example.

Organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements are encouraged to provide a clear description and supporting documentation (for example, letters of support or Memoranda of Understanding) in the application that demonstrate the relationship between the tribe or tribes and the organization. The documentation is further described in the Announcement in Section IV.B., Content and Form of Application.

Applicants must propose work on tribal lands, throughout traditional use areas, or in coastal watersheds that support fish populations that are or have been integral to the living culture of tribes (Section I.A).

Ineligible applicants can partner with tribes and organizations that represent tribes through formal legal agreements on an application, but are not eligible to submit an application directly.

A reminder that Indian tribes and organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements are eligible to apply to both fish passage competitions.

Slide 22 [22:55]
Section III.B describes match requirements, and that these opportunities do NOT have a non-federal matching requirement.

However, for the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity, NOAA desires non-federal match or cost sharing to demonstrate partnerships, and there is an evaluation criterion that addresses non-federal contributions to the project.

For the *Tribal Fish Passage* opportunity, there is no evaluation criterion that addresses non-federal contributions to the project. Non-federal match funds may be optionally included within the application to demonstrate stakeholder support for the proposed work.

Slide 23 [23:36]
There are some project types that are ineligible for both of these funding opportunities. These are described in Section III.C. These include:

- Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, license condition, statute, or regulation are not eligible. Applicants planning to combine grant or matching funds with mitigation should review the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources rule that describes scenarios where mitigation credits may or may not be obtained in association with federal financial incentives. The citation for this rule can be found in the funding opportunity.
- Effectiveness monitoring and research are also not eligible project types. The NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation values effectiveness monitoring and research, but funds are not included within this solicitation to support monitoring and research-focused projects. Effectiveness monitoring is longer-term than implementation monitoring, and often requires detailed field investigations of multiple physical, biological, and geochemical processes. Effectiveness monitoring that contributes to tribal capacity building may be considered eligible for funding in the *Tribal Fish Passage* competition. More information is available in Section III.C, including a website with information to reach agency monitoring contacts.

Implementation monitoring, as described in Section IV.B and V.A.2(c), is an eligible activity, as is the tracking of performance measures and metrics.

Slide 24 [25:18]
Now that you have a basic understanding of the objectives, priorities, eligibility and funding levels for these opportunities, you may want to temporarily skip ahead to Section V.A. - Evaluation Criteria.

These criteria explain exactly how your proposal will be scored by reviewers. For that reason, we recommend that you look at these sections early on, as you decide whether to submit a proposal to these opportunities.

Once you've reviewed the Evaluation Criteria, and have decided to submit your proposal, reading Section IV.B will help you determine what details to include while addressing the evaluation criteria.

Remember, the reviewers are scoring based on the Evaluation Criteria in Section V, not Section IV.B that addresses content details.

You will notice that the Evaluation Criteria and the section on Content follow the same topical order. We recommend that your application follows this order as well, which helps reviewers locate the information you provide.

Slide 25 [26:27]
The categories of criteria are standard NOAA categories, and they are interpreted for each funding opportunity. The five broad categories and their weights for each of the competitions are shown here:

1. Importance and Applicability, 28 points for *National Fish Passage* and 35 points for *Tribal Fish Passage*
2. Technical and Scientific Merit, 28 points for *National Fish Passage* and 25 points for *Tribal Fish Passage*
3. Applicant Qualifications, 10 points for both *National Fish Passage* and *Tribal Fish Passage*
4. Project Costs, 19 points for *National Fish Passage* and 15 points for *Tribal Fish Passage*
5. Outreach and Education, 15 points for both *National Fish Passage* and *Tribal Fish Passage*

We worked to make these funding opportunities as parallel as we could so that differences are clear and intentional. Also, we expect some Indian tribes and tribal organizations representing Indian tribes to consider applying to both competitions.

There are several sub-criteria within these categories in each of the funding opportunities. If you need help understanding any of the evaluation criteria, do not hesitate to contact me, Janine Harris, for the *Tribal Fish Passage* competition or Melanie Gange, the Competition Manager for the *Fish Passage* funding opportunity.

Slide 26 [28:01]
Now that you've considered the evaluation criteria, we recommend reviewing Section IV. This is where you will find important information about the application submission process. This includes:

- Where to find the application package on Grants.gov,
- How to register and submit your application, and
- Information about the recommended content of your application.

For application packages, federal forms, and instructions, please see the Grants.gov post. You can search Grants.gov by the opportunity numbers on Slide 2 in this presentation.

There are 4 main components of your application package:

1. Federal forms
2. A project summary and project narrative
3. A budget narrative
4. Supplemental materials (including relevant project designs)

Section IV.G contains the instructions for how to submit your application, including registering to use Grants.gov and registering in SAM, the System for Award Management. We bring this up because if you haven't done so already, now would be a good time to initiate the registration process, or, if you have registered previously, to check whether your status is active. You are required to maintain an active SAM registration throughout your award. Sections IV.C and IV.G describe your application process and SAM requirements.

Slide 27 [29:32]
Eligible applications will undergo technical review, ranking, and selection based on the Evaluation Criteria that I just outlined. This review creates a ranked list of proposals. NOAA selecting officials can choose to use Selection Factors to balance the distribution of funds. These Selection Factors are listed in Section V.C and include topics such as balancing funds by geographic area or the participation of targeted groups.

Applicants should anticipate the earliest start date for awards will be July 1, 2024.

Slide 28 [30:15]
Here are some helpful reminders and tips for your application process.

- Please read the entire funding opportunity and verify that all requirements are complete before you submit the proposal.
- Start the process of SAM registration now, if you are not yet registered or currently active. The SAM, System for Award Management, registration can take several weeks, so save yourself some stress and start early. Once you have a SAM registration, go to Grants.gov to register your organization and create profiles for people authorized to submit proposals. Someone in your organization may have to verify that you can submit proposals.
- Don't wait until the last minute to submit your applications. Grants.gov can take up to two business days to validate or reject applications. In addition, our program may be able to screen your applications if they are submitted early, and let you know if anything is missing. Also, there is scheduled maintenance one weekend every month where the system may not be available, so don't assume you can work on the weekend if you fall behind.
- Please feel free to call or email us with any questions you may have. Our contact information is at the end of the presentation, and at the end of each funding opportunity.

Slide 29 [31:31]
At this time, we're going to address some Frequently Asked Questions about our funding opportunities. The answers apply to both competitions described today unless we specifically state otherwise. Melanie Gange will assist me by reading the answers to our questions.

Slide 30 [31:51]
Janine: Will the Office of Habitat Conservation be releasing additional habitat restoration

Notices of Funding Opportunity this year under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or Inflation Reduction Act?

Melanie: Yes. These Notice of Funding Opportunities are the first two funding opportunities that the Office of Habitat Conservation intends to release in 2023. We expect to release two more funding opportunities later this year. One of those funding opportunities will be focused specifically on tribes and underserved communities. These opportunities can be found at the website listed on this slide.

Slide 31 [32:33]
Janine: How do these funding opportunities compare to other funding opportunities? Which one should I apply to?

Melanie: We recommend that you read all funding opportunities carefully, including the Program Priorities and Evaluation Criteria. Your organization is the most knowledgeable about the project and the time you have available to apply for one or more funding opportunities. Some funding opportunities may limit eligible applicants, so look at that section of the funding opportunity first.

Slide 32 [33:06]
Janine: Can an applicant apply to more than one NOAA funding opportunity for the same project?

Melanie: You may apply to more than one funding opportunity for the same project. If a project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amounts requested or secured from other funding sources, and whether the funds requested or secured are federal or non-federal, should be included in the application.

Slide 33 [33:36]
Janine: Is there a limit on the number of proposals from any one applicant, geographic area, or region?

Melanie: No. There is no limit on the number of proposals from any one applicant, geographic area, or region.

Slide 34 [33:53]
Janine: Will proposals that include projects located in multiple states be competitive?

Melanie: Potentially. All proposals should demonstrate how the projects will collectively contribute to the priorities of this funding opportunity within a watershed or geographic area. Proposals that include projects in multiple states but do not show a collective contribution to a measurable outcome may not be as competitive.

Slide 35 [34:26]

Janine: Will funding be available to provide fish passage at privately-owned hydroelectric projects?

Melanie: Yes, the opportunity will provide funding for fish passage that is not required by a separate regulation or FERC license condition or exemption. FERC is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Funding can be used to incentivize project owners to decommission and remove their dams and project facilities. The funding may support a range of activities. A complete list of ineligible activities is in Section III.C of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Slide 36 [35:06]
Janine: My project benefits a species with a commercial fisheries disaster declaration. Is it eligible?

Melanie: Yes, disaster declarations are made for species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Projects benefiting these species are eligible for this funding.

Slide 37 [35:31]
Janine: Is funding available to hire a new staff person to help manage a restoration project?

Melanie: Yes, building the capacity of new and existing restoration partners are goals of both funding opportunities.

In the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity, there is an evaluation criteria regarding allocation of your requested funds and cost-effectiveness. In that criterion, we describe how we wish to see capacity building requests, including staff, that demonstrate a direct link to the fish passage activities in your proposal.

Building the capacity of tribal partners to participate in the fish passage project development process, including reviewing projects and managing project design and construction, is a Program Priority in the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity. The evaluation criteria regarding importance and applicability and overall applicant qualifications show how proposals for capacity building only will be evaluated in the context of all project types.

Slide 38 [36:39]
Janine: Will support for tribes, indigenous and underserved communities be considered in the scoring criteria for these funding opportunities?

Melanie: Yes, support for tribes, indigenous and underserved communities is emphasized in the funding priorities and selection process of these funding opportunities. We will give high consideration to proposals that describe how the proposed restoration work will benefit tribes and underserved communities.

In addition to one of the opportunities being limited to tribes, in the *National Fish Passage*

funding opportunity, support for these communities is emphasized in the evaluation criteria. One place to look for this emphasis is in the Outreach and Education evaluation criteria of the *National Fish Passage* opportunity.

Slide 39 [37:32]
Janine: I am interested in regional planning and project feasibility. How will a proposal that addresses these pre-restoration phases compete?

Melanie: Section I.A. of the funding opportunities addresses the Program Objective, which describes eligible activities.

The *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity will give priority to applications that include implementation activities. Please see the Evaluation Criteria in that funding opportunity to understand how priority is given to applications that include implementation.

The *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity will not give priority to implementation activities over planning or project feasibility.

Slide 40 [38:18]
Janine: What level of detail is expected in the budget narrative?

Melanie: The budget narrative should be organized by the object codes on the SF424A form, with all costs clearly justified. Detailed budgets, by object class, are expected for all contracts and subawards included in your application.

The NOAA Restoration Center provides a full budget narrative example as part of our Supplemental Guidance for NOAA Restoration Center Applications. These resources are available at the NOAA Fisheries website shown on this slide. Our budget guidance is specific to habitat restoration, but is based on the guidance provided by NOAA's Grants Management Division at the website shown on this slide.

Slide 41 [39:06]
Janine: I'm concerned about inflation and competition for contractors resulting in cost increases. How can I draft an accurate budget with this uncertainty?

Melanie: Budgets are inherently estimates. Grants regulations allow applicants to budget for contingency costs. Provide your best budget based on experience and your research on expected cost increases. Provide details about how contingency funds will be spent if they are not needed for the proposed project costs. In some instances, we could choose to incrementally fund an award to help manage uncertainty and risk.

Slide 42 [39:50]
Janine: What federal policies am I required to follow if I receive an award? Will there be any specific to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or Inflation Reduction Act?

Melanie: Federal grant award regulations can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 2 CFR 200. These regulations cover a wide variety of topics. Some topics we are frequently asked about include contracting procedures, award changes, and audit requirements – all of which are covered in 2 CFR 200. Many of these projects will include building or modifying infrastructure, and consequently the Build American Buy American Act will apply in those situations. We'll address that Act next. For certain larger projects, there may be requirements related to signage acknowledging the source of these funds. Any award requirements will be contained in the award conditions. You should read those carefully before accepting an award.

Slide 43 [40:54]
Janine: Does the Build American, Buy American Act (BABA) apply to funds provided through these funding opportunities?

Melanie: Yes. When creating your budget and project narrative, please see section VI.B for more information about the "BABA" Act requirements and how they pertain to funding available through these opportunities. The Department of Commerce has a BABA website, listed here. Any available waivers, including one for De Minimis Infrastructure Project Purchases, Small Grants, and Minor Components within Iron and Steel Products, can be found there. Individual project waivers are a possibility but are unlikely.

Slide 44 [41:43]
Janine: And finally, what should I do if I can't get registered with SAM.gov or Grants.gov in time to submit my application?

Melanie: Registration at these sites is important to verify that the person submitting the application is authorized to commit their organization to the proposed project. However, if you can't complete the registration and submission on time, each funding opportunity contains a mailing address in Section IV.G. The postmark deadline is the same as the electronic submission deadline – 11:59 Eastern Time on the due date.

Slide 45 [42:25]
Thank you Melanie. That is the end of our Question and Answer session.

This last slide shows our contact information to follow up on any questions you have about your proposal or the Grants.gov process. Note that the Grants.gov help desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays. And please reach out to Melanie Gange with any questions about the *National Fish Passage* funding opportunity at (301) 427-8664 and fish.passage.grants@noaa.gov, and please reach out to me, Janine Harris at (301) 427-8635 and infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov, with any questions about the *Tribal Fish Passage* funding opportunity.

We look forward to hearing from you. This concludes today's presentation.