

Sea Grant-Marine Debris Special Projects Competition

SPECIAL PROJECTS ANNOUNCEMENT

Competition: Sea Grant-Marine Debris Special Projects Competition

Closing Date: January 9, 2020

Eligible Sea Grant Programs: This competition is open to all Sea Grant Programs

The NOAA National Sea Grant Office and the NOAA Marine Debris Program anticipate that up to \$300,000 in total Federal funding will be available to support projects under this announcement.

Project Description:

Marine debris is defined as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 C.F.R. § 909.1). Marine debris can include land-based solid waste items such as plastic bags, cigarette butts, foam take-out containers, and balloons, as well as ocean-based items such as derelict fishing gear and abandoned vessels. Marine debris is primarily the result of human actions such as ineffective or improper waste management, dumping, and littering, or stormwater runoff. Fishing gear may be lost from storms, accidents, or improper disposal, and become marine debris. There are many adverse impacts from marine debris, including wildlife injury and death from entanglement or ingestion, exposure to toxic chemicals that attach to or are in plastics, habitat destruction, vessel damage, and economic loss to tourism, fisheries, and maritime activities.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP), a division of the Office of Response and Restoration, leads national efforts to address marine debris. The mission of the MDP is to investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris. This mission is achieved through collaboration with partners to research, prevent, and remove marine debris to conserve and protect our nation's marine environment, coastal economy, and navigation safety.

This competition seeks projects that meet the goals and objectives identified within the [Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan](#) (FY 2016-2020), [regional or state Marine Debris Action Plans](#) or align with the program components identified in the [Marine Debris Act](#).

1. Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan: In 2016, the MDP finalized the Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan. This document serves as the MDP's five-year plan to tackle marine debris through five strategic goals: Coordination, Emergency Response & Preparedness, Removal, Prevention, and Research & Assessment.
2. Regional Marine Debris Action Plans: To support coordination across the U.S., MDP facilitates and supports the creation of Marine Debris Action Plans. The purpose of these plans is to improve coordination and galvanize new action to address everyday marine debris. Plans are finalized for: Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii, Gulf of Mexico, Florida, the Southeast, Virginia, and the Great Lakes. Plans for the Gulf of Maine and the Mid-Atlantic are under development. Actions within these plans are the responsibility of the stakeholders in the states or regions to lead or support. The finalized Marine Debris Action Plans can be accessed on the [MDP website](#).
3. Marine Debris Act: The MDP is authorized by Congress to work on marine debris through the Marine Debris Act, signed into law in 2006 and amended in 2012 and 2018. The Act requires the program to "identify, determine sources of, assess, prevent, reduce, and remove marine debris and address the adverse impacts of marine debris on the economy of the United States, marine environment, and navigation safety." The Act outlines program components that are echoed in the Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan.

Applicants are encouraged to align their project with the Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan, the respective state or regional Marine Debris Action Plan, or with the program components of the Marine Debris Act.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with the respective [Marine Debris Program Regional Coordinator](#) in the development of the project proposal in advance of submission.

Funding availability:

Proposals should request a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$50,000 in federal funds. Applications should cover a project period of performance from one to two years in duration. NOAA expects that all primary project activities would be completed within two years of the start date of the award.

Match Requirement:

The Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. § 1951 et seq.) requires MDP to leverage its federal grant funding with non-federal cost share or match. Applicants often satisfy this requirement by developing and including public and private partnerships, as well as in-kind and financial contributions, to accomplish the overall project objectives. Applicants must provide a minimum 1:1 ratio of non-federal matching contributions to MDP's funds requested to conduct the proposed project. In addition to required cost sharing, the MDP encourages applicants to leverage additional investment where possible.

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants are all Sea Grant Colleges. All projects must take place within the United States or territories or their respective waterways.

Time Frame: Start date May 1, 2020. Projects must be completed no later than April 30, 2022.

Reporting: Selected projects will be placed on Sea Grant omnibus awards and progress will be reported annually.

Evaluation Criteria: The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals. Criteria are equally weighted.

1. IMPORTANCE AND/OR RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT TO THE MISSION GOALS:

This criterion ascertains whether the proposed work is relevant to the goals set out by the MDP in this announcement. Reviewers will determine whether the proposed work aligns with Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan goals, regional or state Marine Debris Action Plans actions, or program components identified in the Marine Debris Act. See above for more details.

2. TECHNICAL/SCIENTIFIC MERIT:

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Whether the proposal clearly identifies goals and objectives, and whether the timelines for the project are reasonable and in line with the award period guidelines;

- Whether the project will deliver tangible, specific results that are measurable within the proposed time-frame.

- Whether the proposed methods and approaches to be used in the project are valid to achieve project goals.

3. OVERALL QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANTS:

This evaluates whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. PROJECT COSTS:

The budget is analyzed to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:

This criterion reviews whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources, Sea Grant's strategic focus areas, and the goals of the individual competition announcement. For this competition, this includes the quality of the dissemination plan.

Other Information

Questions about this competition or the Special Projects Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) may be sent to oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov. Please specify that your question is related to the SG-Marine Debris special competition in the subject line.

Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006252](#), available at [Grants.gov](#), for eligible applicants, required elements of the application, how to submit, general programmatic priorities and selection factors, and other necessary information. Submit your application to **SPECIAL PROJECTS "A"** under this Opportunity in grants.gov.

Curriculum Vitae and References do not count towards the 15-page limit for the Project Description. Although the Notice of Funding Opportunity states that they do, this Special Project Announcement takes precedence.

More information can also be found in the "Frequently Asked Questions" located at: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Funding-Opportunities>. This document will be continually updated with questions received that are of general interest to prospective applicants.

Fillable versions of required Sea Grant forms can be found here:

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>

Guidance for completing these forms is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document:

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>)