

Sea Grant-Marine Debris Special Projects Competition

SPECIAL PROJECTS "D" ANNOUNCEMENT

Competition:

Sea Grant-Marine Debris Special Projects Competition

Closing Date:

March 5, 2021 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time.

Eligible Sea Grant Programs:

This competition is open to all Sea Grant programs. All projects must take place within the United States or territories or their respective waterways.

Award Time Frame:

Estimated start date July 1, 2021. Projects must be completed no later than June 30, 2023.

Funding Availability:

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

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.

The Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. § 1951 et seq.) requires the 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, volunteer, and financial contributions, to accomplish the overall project objectives. Applicants must provide a minimum 1:1 ratio of non-federal matching contributions to the 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.

Project Description:

Program Overview

The 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 in order to conserve and protect our nation's marine environment, coastal economy, and navigation safety.

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 (but is not limited to) 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, littering, or stormwater runoff. Fishing gear may be lost in storms, accidents, or be disposed of improperly, 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.

Funding Opportunity

This competition seeks projects that prevent the introduction of marine debris into the marine and coastal environment. Competitive projects will actively engage and educate a target audience in programs designed to raise awareness, reduce barriers to marine debris prevention (e.g., lack of access to waste receptacles or alternatives to single-use items), and encourage and support changes in behaviors to ensure long-term prevention of marine debris. It is encouraged that projects implement activities that fit into existing MDP Regional Marine Debris Action Plans or meet the prevention goal objectives identified within the Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan (FY 2021-2025). More information on these resources is provided below:

1. **Regional Marine Debris Action Plans:** To support coordination across the United States the MDP facilitates 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: California, Florida, the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Maine, the Gulf of Mexico, Hawaii, Oregon, the Southeast, Virginia, and Washington. Plans for the Mid-Atlantic and Long Island Sound are under development, and some states, like North Carolina, have developed their own Marine Debris Action Plans. Prevention-related 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](#).
2. **Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan:** In 2020, the MDP finalized the [Marine Debris Program's Strategic Plan for FY 2021-2025](#). This document serves as the MDP's five-year plan to tackle marine debris through six strategic goals: Prevention, Removal, Research, Monitoring and Detection, Response, and Coordination. This plan prioritizes prevention as the ultimate solution for marine debris. Although work must continue to focus on the immediate needs for removal and response, we recognize that the problem of marine debris will only be solved through prevention.

Marine Debris Program Regional Coordination

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the respective [Marine Debris Program Regional Coordinator](#) in the development of the project proposal in advance of submission. The regional coordinator may be able to provide information on proven prevention techniques, connections to other potential partners and regional resources, and help to align the proposal with the appropriate regional plan or MDP strategic plan. If awarded, the recipient will be required to work with the respective MDP regional coordinator throughout the award period, including regularly scheduled update meetings.

Application Requirements:

Consult the NOFO **NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006435**, available at [Grants.gov](#), for details regarding required elements of the application, how to submit, general programmatic priorities, selection factors, and other necessary information. Submit your application to **SPECIAL PROJECTS "D"** under this opportunity in [Grants.gov](#).

Discrepancies between this special project announcement and the NOFO may exist. Specific application details and instructions outlined in this special project announcement take precedence over guidelines in the NOFO.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

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

1. Importance, relevance, and applicability of the proposed project to 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 prevention-related regional or state Marine Debris Action Plans actions or the MDP's Strategic Plan prevention goal objectives. See above for more details.

2. Technical and scientific merit:

This criterion assesses whether the proposal is technically sound, employs appropriate methods, and outlines clear objectives. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- A. Whether the proposal clearly identifies goals and objectives, and whether the timeline for the project is reasonable and in line with the award period guidelines;
- B. Whether the project will deliver tangible, specific results that are attainable and measurable within the proposed time frame.
- C. Whether the proposed methods and approaches to be used in the project are valid to achieve project goals.

3. Overall qualification of applicants:

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

4. Project costs:

This criterion analyzes the budget 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 to a target audience (for example, underserved and underrepresented audiences is a high priority). For this competition, this includes the quality of the dissemination plan.

Other Information:

Award Form:

Selected projects will be placed on Sea Grant Omnibus awards.

Reporting:

Progress for selected projects will be reported annually. Sea Grant will be responsible for collecting and reporting prevention metrics to the MDP. Metrics will correspond to the MDP FY 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and awardees will be expected to complete a template document. Example metrics may include:

- Number of P-12 students served through formal education/outreach
- Number of Post-secondary and adult students served through formal education/outreach
- Number of youth and adults (combined) served through informal education/outreach
- Number of educators served through marine debris professional learning opportunities
- Others as appropriate to the scope of the project

Metrics will be finalized with selected projects based on the scope of the proposed activities.

Products and Communications:

External products and communications produced with this funding must acknowledge the MDP as a funding contributor, as appropriate.

Agency Contacts:

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 Sea Grant-Marine Debris Special Projects Competition in the subject line.

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>