



# Special Projects Competition

## Advancing the Community Engaged Internship Program for Undergraduate Students

### SPECIAL PROJECTS "1" ANNOUNCEMENT

#### **Competition:**

FY 2023 Advancing the Community Engaged Internship Program for Undergraduate Students

#### **Closing Dates and Deadlines:**

June 1, 2023

#### **Eligible Sea Grant Programs:**

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

#### **Award Time Frame:**

The proposed start date should be no earlier than September 1, 2023. The project end date should be no later than August 31, 2025.

#### **Funding Availability:**

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to \$500,000 in FY 2023 federal funds will be available to one selected Sea Grant program in order to support coordination activities and student stipends associated with the Community Engaged Internship (CEI) program on behalf of the Sea Grant network.

The award will be no greater than \$500,000. Match is being waived for this award, because the project will benefit the entire National Sea Grant College Program.

#### **Project Description:**

This funding opportunity intends to fund one project that will support the continuation and growth of the Community Engaged Internship (CEI) program for undergraduate students at all Sea Grant programs. Key elements of this opportunity should include:

- A desire to fund coordination activities associated with managing the program; and
- Supporting students through this program.

Priorities of this funding opportunity include:

- National coordination of program, in close collaboration with both the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and the CEI advisory committee;
- Student stipends sufficient to cover at least one student at each Sea Grant program (Note: It is expected that each Sea Grant program receiving funds to support a student stipend will also leverage their own funds or resources to support at least one additional student);
- Structured professional development for and mentoring of CEI students; and
- Ongoing input and collaboration with the CEI advisory committee.

**Application Requirements:**

Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007550](#), 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 "I"** 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.**

Applications must include the following elements. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

1. **Project Narrative** - The Project Narrative must include the following elements:
  - a. **Project Description.** The total number of pages in the project description can be up to fifteen (15). Applicants do not need to use the entire 15-page maximum. Depending on the complexity of the proposed activities, a shorter description may suffice. Cover page, abstract, any works cited, CVs, letters of support, and current and pending support sections included do not contribute to the suggested page limit.
    - i. Cover page (not included in the page count)
      - Project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of co-PIs.
      - Budget overview - Total cost and annual breakdown of requested funding, including by partner if appropriate.
    - ii. Project Abstract (½ page maximum; not included in the page count)
    - iii. Project background
      - Explain the specific problem(s) this project seeks to address and justify its importance.
    - iv. Project objectives
      - Provide a list of clearly defined objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity.
    - v. Project details
      - Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives.
    - vi. Anticipated outcomes and results
      - What are the expected outcomes and results related to supporting a diverse coastal and Great Lakes workforce?

- What are the expected outcomes and results related to the creation of data products, tools, technologies, and/or management practices?
- vii. Project timeline
  - Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work covering the entire duration of the project. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and release of results.
  - Applicants submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects should state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.
- viii. Outreach and engagement plan
  - Provide a cohesive strategy to ensure that users across the greater geographic region, beyond those who actively participate in the proposed work, will learn about the project's outcomes.
- ix. Diversity statement
  - In this section, describe how well the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, geography, etc.) and how these groups are given a voice in the community of practice. Examples could include (but are not limited to) the full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in conducting this work or benefitting from its outcomes.
  - Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by NSGO related to diversity, equity and inclusion: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visiting/DiversityInclusion>
- x. Works cited (does not count towards page limit)
  - All in-text citations should be listed here.
- xi. Curriculum vitae (CV) for each PI (does not count towards page limit)
  - Each person's CV should not be longer than 2 pages. Excess pages will not be included in the review.
- xii. Letters of support (does not count towards page limit)
  - All letters of support should be included here. Required in the instance that a Sea Grant program is applying on behalf of a partnership of multiple Sea Grant programs; otherwise, recommended but optional.
- xiii. Current and pending support (does not count towards page limit)
  - Describe any current or pending sources of support if applicable.

- b. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)
  - i. Applicants **must** ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full and includes detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information.
  - i. A separate questionnaire must be completed for each relevant action/project in the proposal.
  - ii. The questionnaire can be found [here](#).
  - iii. Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire, including how to describe work that will not involve any environmental impact, can be found [here](#). Examples of questionnaires can be found [here](#).\*
- c. Data Management Plan
  - i. All applications **must** include a Data Management Plan that is compliant with NOAA's [Public Access to Research Results](#) Plan. The Data Management Plan should not exceed 2 pages. The Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of metadata and data expected to be created during the course of the project, plans for disseminating the metadata and data to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of the metadata and data.
  - ii. If proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, such as the scoping activities and research competition, please include the following statement at the end of your proposal: "Because this project will not generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is not required."

**2. Budget Narrative and Justification.** *The Budget Narrative must include the following documents (Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification) in that order and format. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found [here](#).*

- a. Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362) - Sea Grant 90-4 Forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 Form should be completed for each project year as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3). Guidance on filling out these forms is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).
- b. Budget Justification - For each year of the project, a Budget Justification is required. Each Budget Justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each Budget Justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate. Guidance on completing the Budget Justification is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).

**3. Overall Application.** *In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov or on the Sea Grant website (links found below). These include:*

- a. SF-424 Form ([Grants.gov](#), OMB Control No. 4040-0004)
  - i. This form, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," **must** identify the entire funding period, as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the

- applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution's accurate EIN and DUNS and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.
- b. SF-424A Form ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), OMB Control No. 4040-0006)
    - i. This form, titled "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs," should describe the entire funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Each federal and match year should have its own column. The form, titled "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.
  - c. SF-424B Assurances ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), OMB Control No. 4040-0007)
    - i. The form, titled "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.
  - d. CD-511 ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), US Department of Commerce)
    - i. The form, titled "Certification Regarding Lobbying," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.
  - e. SF-LLL ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), OMB Control No. 0348-0046) if applicable
    - i. The form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

**Application Evaluation Criteria:**

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals. Note that the weights of each criteria are different from the Evaluation Criteria laid out in the Special Projects NOFO announcement. Proposals submitted to this competition will be evaluated by at least three independent written reviews based on:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (20%). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the this competition, this includes:
  - a. Plans to advance CEI program through coordination,
  - b. method of providing student stipends,
  - c. plans for student development and mentorship
2. Technical/scientific merit (20%). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For this competition, this includes:
  - a. Alignment with goals of CEI program as articulated in the existing vision and action plans for the Sea Grant Traditional and Local Knowledge as well as the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility communities of practice;
  - b. Demonstrated knowledge of lessons learned and advanced understanding of the CEI program after three years of program implementation.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (15%). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For this competition, this includes:
  - a. Clearly articulated ability to serve a coordinating role for this geographically dispersed program
  - b. Clearly articulated ability to administer stipends to students
4. Project costs (15%). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. For this competition, this includes:
  - a. National coordinator
  - b. Student stipends for at least 34 undergraduate students
  - c. Other costs associated with professional development of students
5. Outreach and Education, including efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable engagement (30%). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For this competition, this includes:
  - a. Leveraging support of a coordinator to enhance outreach to potential students
  - b. Enhancement of student development, mentorship, and cohort building
  - c. Ensuring means for quality control of CEI projects

Additionally, projects will be recommended for funding only if they have a complete application package and if funds are available.

#### **Other Information:**

##### **Demographics Information:**

- NOAA will not provide collected demographics information to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.
  - Programs must submit documentation by either including a statement within the application, or via email to [sg.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:sg.grants@noaa.gov), that they have responded to the new requirement to provide the following information for all named collaborators on the proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035).
  - Note: Programs may use their own method of collecting this information. The NSGO has also developed an [online form](#) as an optional method for collection. Submission to this form would count as fulfillment of this requirement.
1. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? List all that apply.
    - a) Black
    - b) Latino
    - c) Indigenous and/or Native American
    - d) Asian American
    - e) Pacific Islander
    - f) Other person of color
    - g) Members of religious minorities
    - h) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons

- i) Persons with disabilities
- j) Persons who live in rural areas
- k) Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
- l) No, I do not identify with any of these groups

**Reporting:**

This will be a stand-alone (i.e., non-omnibus) award for which annual progress reporting will be required.

Once applications have been selected for funding, applicants must submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (for each project within the application) through the [90-2 Webform portal](#). This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been awarded. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on [Inside Sea Grant](#). Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the [National Sea Grant College Program public website](#).

Recipients are required to use the National Sea Grant Planning Implementation and Evaluation Reporting (PIER) project database to communicate with the National Sea Grant Office on activities relating to this award. This includes tracking progress and impacts, in addition to performance metrics.

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Agency Contacts:**

Questions about this competition or the Special Projects Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) may be sent to [sg.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:sg.grants@noaa.gov). Please specify that your question is related to the Advancing the Community Engaged Internship Program for Undergraduate Students 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>