



Special Projects Competition

National Sea Grant IIJA Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions

SPECIAL PROJECTS "H" ANNOUNCEMENT

Competition:

FY 2022-2023 IIJA National Sea Grant Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions

Closing Dates and Deadlines:

Letters of Intent due 8/16/2022

Full Proposals due 9/15/2022

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. Programs may submit more than one application.

Award Time Frame:

Projects are for up to three years. The start date should be January 1, 2023, with projects to be completed no later than December 31, 2025.

Funding Availability:

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates approximately **\$3,000,000** in FY 2022 and 2023 federal funds will be available to individual Sea Grant programs in order to support approximately 10-15 Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions.

Each award will be no greater than \$300,000. Applications DO NOT require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects.

Project Description and Priorities:

To strengthen efforts in prevention and mitigation of marine debris, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) has directed NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program to execute \$50.0 million over five years "for marine debris prevention and removal." There are many types, sources, and causes of marine debris, defined for the purposes of this competition 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).

While marine debris is a universal issue, it is also intensely local - the activities and attitudes of individuals, communities, and industries drive the global problem. It is important for marine debris prevention and removal to be addressed at the local scale, along with other efforts at larger scales, with the support of key players in the community. Community coalitions and local partnerships are essential to creating effective and long-lasting action on marine debris.

Due to lack of resources, many communities have not yet been able to invest funding and time into

addressing challenges related to the prevention and removal of marine debris. This funding opportunity will support the creation of coalitions and partnerships among communities, groups, and localities - especially those that have been traditionally underserved - to address various marine debris challenges.

Program priorities include (but are not limited to):

- Building local coalitions and partnerships to identify and actively address marine debris prevention and removal at the community level. Coalitions must include at least one Sea Grant program but are encouraged to also include a variety of other stakeholders.
- Providing technical support to local businesses, municipalities, and other stakeholders to mitigate marine debris
- Enhance community literacy around marine debris through formal and informal education
- Educate and develop a local marine debris-aware workforce (e.g. fishers, harbormasters, charter boat operators, waterfront business owners, etc.)
- Address topics from relevant, existing planning efforts, such as regional marine debris action plans (<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/emergency-response-guides-and-regional-action-plans>), strategic plans, or other, similar documents

Planning and capacity building activities are encouraged, and projects should have clear deliverables that lead to measurable positive outcomes that benefit communities. Projects should complement broader NOAA efforts, particularly those from the National Ocean Service's Marine Debris Program, focused on active removal, mitigation, and prevention of marine debris. Participating Sea Grant programs must determine and prioritize local requirements and research-driven solutions that fully integrate the needs of historically underserved communities as defined by Executive Order 13985 (Section 2(b)).

Proposed projects should also address the following four foundational elements:

- Be responsive to state, local, and regional needs within a national framework.
- Leverage existing Sea Grant and partner investments and capacities.
- Embed diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) fully into the effort.
- Show how this work will be enhanced through partnerships, including collaboration among Sea Grant programs, with the NOAA Marine Debris Program, and with other appropriate partners.

Principal investigators of proposals selected for funding will be required to participate in annual National Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings to share results of work conducted, discuss challenges, synthesize outputs, and to plan next steps.

Example projects may include (but are not limited to):

- Partnering with local businesses and business associations (e.g. food service, tourism, waterfront, etc.) to identify marine debris control points in their operations, determine alternative materials and processes that reduce debris generation, and implement cost effective replacement strategies.
- Establishing/scaling formal educational initiatives that engage students and schools in efforts that learn about and address marine debris and its sources in their communities. Conducting outreach to local commercial and recreational fishers related to derelict fishing gear, marine debris, waste management, and port reception facilities. Establish and encourage net pick-up and disposal options for fishers, boaters, and other ocean users to bring derelict fishing gear ashore.

- Supporting community efforts to identify local sources of microplastics and microfibers and mitigate their release into local waterways. Generating resources that increase awareness of microplastics and microfibers for a wide range of audiences from the public to policymakers.
- Partnering with municipalities to improve waste and stormwater management to prevent debris from reaching local waterways. Assist these communities to establish or improve their recycling practices.
- Engaging communities to get involved with local and state rulemaking processes. Continue to support efforts that reduce the use of single use and disposable plastics.

This is one of two National Sea Grant federal funding opportunities in support of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to address the prevention and removal of marine debris. A second opportunity **NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007452**, the “**National Sea Grant Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Marine Debris Challenge Competition**” will support original, innovative, and transformational marine debris prevention and removal research that pushes the boundaries of existing technologies and approaches, changes the current landscape of marine debris mitigation, and ties that research to tangible outputs. The two Sea Grant IIJA NOFOs complement a Marine Debris Program NOFO that will fund large scale marine debris removal and interception projects.

Application Requirements:

Consult the NOFO **NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007012**, available at [Grants.gov](https://www.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 "H"** 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.

Letter of Intent

Applicants will be asked to submit a letter of intent (LOI) before a full proposal is submitted. Applicants that do not submit a LOI will not be eligible to submit a full proposal. Full proposals should not deviate greatly from the LOI. However, LOIs are not wholly binding and the applicant may tweak details of their project before submitting the full proposal as their research to application plan evolves. LOIs are meant to provide Sea Grant with metrics on the scope and size of the application pool in order to assist with reviewer recruitment and review event planning.

LOIs should not exceed 2 pages and should include the following components:

- Working project title
- PI Name(s)
- PI Position(s) and Affiliation
- Partnering Sea Grant program
- Contact information
- Brief discussion of the partner community, including justification for selection

- Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach
- The approximate amount of funding to be requested

Full Proposal

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. 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 PI and any co-PIs.
 - Budget overview - Total cost and annual breakdown of requested funding by partner.
 - ii. Project abstract (½ page maximum; not included in the page count)
 - iii. Project background
 - Explain the specific marine debris problem(s) this project seeks to address and justify its importance.
 - Describe the partner community, the community's needs with regards to marine debris, and what has prevented them from addressing these issues previously.
 - iv. Project objectives
 - Provide a list of clearly defined project 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.
 - Provide a list of all project partners and explain how this project leverages the expertise of local communities and stakeholders.
 - Provide a description of any cost sharing, leveraged funds, or in-kind match or other contributions (e.g. personnel, volunteer hours, services, etc.).
 - vi. Anticipated outcomes and deliverables
 - Provide a list of expected outcomes and deliverables that will result from your project. Explain how these outcomes will be directly, beneficially applied to the current and future needs of communities and local stakeholders.
 - vii. Project timeline
 - Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work, which covers 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 deliverables.
 - 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. Future competed research (if applicable)
 - If funds are to be used for competitive research, the program may use a Future Competed Projects placeholder project.
 - Competitions must adhere to the [National Sea Grant Competition Policy](#).
 - As part of the placeholder, the program should provide a short description of:
 - Their proposed research plan, including preliminary topics.
 - How competitively selected projects will be integrated with other program elements and existing strategic/action plans (e.g. relevant Marine Debris Action plans).
 - How the program will proactively engage minority serving institutions, underrepresented researchers, and other groups that have historically been excluded from competitive opportunities.
 - How the program will recruit diverse review panelists.
 - Research projects must also include funds to travel to the annual Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings.
- ix. Community engagement, DEIJA, and outreach plan
 - In this section, describe how the proposed activity was developed in collaboration with community members, including traditionally underserved groups, that are impacted by marine debris or its sources.
 - Describe how the work will provide long-term engagement and support to those groups.
 - 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-Visioning/DiversityInclusion>.
- x. Works cited (does not count towards page limit)
 - Any in-text citations should be listed here.
- xi. Curriculum vitae (CV) for each co-PI (does not count towards page limit)
 - Each co-PI’s CV should not be longer than 2 pages.
- xii. Letters of support (does not count towards page limit)
 - Any letters of support can be included here.
- 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](#).
 - i. Applicants must include funds to travel to the annual Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings.
- 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. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).
- c. Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B (include only if needed) (<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>, OMB Control No. 4060-0006)
 - i. The SF-424A Form described above only includes space to report the applicant's yearly federal and non-federal dollars over two years. If the application covers more than two years of federal and non-federal dollars, then please complete the Additional SF-424A, Extra Section B to report the yearly non-federal matching fund budget of the grant. Guidance on filling out the form is located in the Sea Grant [How to Use Form "424A Extra Section B" Document](#).
This form is an outlier and will be added to the "Budget Narrative Attachment" section on Grants.gov, as described in Section IV. C. 2 of the NOFO.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. 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 receive merit review based on:

A. Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria and weighted as indicated in each element:

1. Importance and applicability of the proposed project to the program goals (25 points). This

criterion assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to program priorities. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

- a. Marine debris problem addressed - Does the project address a critical marine debris prevention and/or removal problem within a specific community? Does the problem have community, local, or regional significance? (4 points)
 - b. Practicality and effectiveness - Does the project propose practical and effective solutions to the specific marine debris problem? Are there direct outcomes that will mitigate marine debris? (7 points)
 - c. Project priority and coalition building - Does the project align with the priorities laid out in the "Project Description and Priorities" of this document? Does the project build intra-community partnerships with local businesses, municipalities, and other stakeholder groups? Are the aforementioned local groups meaningfully brought into the project? (7 points)
 - d. Community benefits - Do the project outcomes have direct benefits to local communities? Will the project outcomes improve the local approach to tackling marine debris in the short, medium, and long terms? (7 points)
2. Technical and scientific merit (30 points). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, whether there are clear project goals and objectives, and data management considerations. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:
- a. Project description and milestones - Does the proposal include sufficient detail to assess the merit of the planned actions? Does the proposal include a realistic timeline of key milestones and deliverables? (5 points)
 - b. Methodological strength - Are the proposed actions feasible? Does the proposed approach have a decent chance of success? Are performance measures and metrics of success explicitly stated by the applicant? (10 points)
 - c. Deliverables - Does the proposal include clear deliverables? Are the deliverables likely to measurably mitigate marine debris while benefiting local communities? Are the deliverables useful and usable to communities - specifically underserved communities - and stakeholders? (10 points)
 - d. Community resilience and longevity - Does the proposal describe the susceptibility of potential project sites and activities to climate change and other long-term impacts? Does the proposal have a sustainability plan for its deliverables? (5 points)
3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (10 points). This criterion assesses whether the applicant and partners possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed activities. Does the project team demonstrate the necessary technical experience and background in planning, design, and management in order to successfully carry out the project?
4. Community Engagement, DEIJA, and Outreach (25 points). This criterion assesses whether the project effectively engages local communities in a few ways. In particular, this criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused, effective, and equitable 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 target audiences. This criterion also assesses how well the project engages underserved communities in addressing marine debris issues and builds lasting partnerships to address marine debris. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:
- a. Inclusive planning and engagement - Are local communities - including underserved communities - meaningfully engaged in project planning and activities? Is there a clear

- strategy to obtain input from a diverse range of communities? (10 points)
- b. Education and workforce development - Does the project enhance marine debris literacy? Is there a clear strategy to share information about the project's work on marine debris to a broad audience through formal or non-formal education? Does the project reach the community members most likely to implement marine debris mitigation solutions? (10 points)
 - c. Sea Grant engagement - Are Sea Grant activities fully supported and utilized? (3 points)
 - d. Marine Debris Action Plans - Does the project tie into existing activities and partnerships outlined in local Marine Debris Action Plans? (2 points)
5. Project Costs (10 points). This criterion assesses whether the project budget is realistic and commensurate with the project's needs and timeframe. Does the budget adequately cover the proposed activities? Are the spending levels appropriate compared to market value? Where possible, do the funds spent flow to and support local communities?

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

Other Information:

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 may be sent to oar.sg.marine-debris@noaa.gov; those regarding 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 IJJA Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions 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>