



Special Projects Opportunity Announcement

FY 2023 Aquaculture Workforce Development Support Projects

SPECIAL PROJECTS "D" ANNOUNCEMENT

Special Project Opportunity Title:

FY 2023 Aquaculture Workforce Development Support Projects

Closing Dates and Deadlines:

February 22, 2023 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time

Eligible Sea Grant Programs:

This competition is available to Sea Grant Programs. A Sea Grant Program may submit more than one application. Programs are encouraged to partner with other SG Programs and/or other entities such as high school vocational programs, institutions including community colleges, colleges, or universities, organizations, and industry as appropriate. Please note that projects focused on a combination or integration of workforce development needs of both aquaculture and the wild caught fishing industry are eligible for this competition. All projects 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 **July 1, 2023**, with projects to be completed no later than **two** years after the project start date. The project end date should be no later than **September 30, 2025**.

Funding Availability:

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to approximately **\$2,000,000** will be available to fund approximately 5 to 10 projects for up to two years through this competition. Awards will be made for no more than **\$400,000** in federal funds per project, and no more than **\$200,000** per year. Applications require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects.

Project Description (program priorities):

The goal of this funding opportunity is to support activities towards workforce development of the U.S. aquaculture industry, including activities and initiatives that may provide training, education, outreach, and technical assistance to the U.S. aquaculture and seafood sector. Proposals responsive to this opportunity will conduct projects to enhance job opportunities for the next generation of aquaculturists, as well as individuals entering the aquaculture industry from other industries such as commercial fishing, and others who are vital to supplying high quality seafood to consumers. Following results from funded FY 21 Sea Grant "Food from the Sea" pilot projects in support of the [Young Fishermen's Development Act \(YFDA\)](#), or based on knowledge of needs and gaps within the state or region, proposals should focus on development and/or expansion of existing targeted and innovative training opportunities; growing the

economies of coastal and Great Lakes communities; and preserving local culture and heritage foodways. Proposed work should ensure that underrepresented/underserved populations and under-resourced communities are actively included as participants and/or partners.

This funding investment should remain consistent with Sea Grant's focus area of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture (SFA) and the Sea Grant Network 10-year Aquaculture Vision and in support of NOAA and Department of Commerce aquaculture goals.

Funding support of the following activities are priorities for this competition:

- 1) Development and/or expansion of aquaculture training programs focused on career development needs of the next generation of aquaculturists, including individuals wishing to enter the aquaculture industry from other industries such as commercial fishing. As appropriate, training programs should provide skills needed to enter a given aquaculture industry such as boating and seamanship, aquaculture methods and practices, and other skills needed to enter aquaculture.
- 2) Development and/or expansion of extension and outreach activities focused on enhancing workforce development and/or aquaculture literacy, such as support for educational and training workshops, meetings, and online resources including digital media resources/toolkits.
- 3) Establishment and/or expansion of internship or work training opportunities with the aquaculture industry.

Please note that projects focused on a combination or integration of workforce development needs of both aquaculture and wild caught fisheries industries are eligible for this competition. Also note that project activities should consider aquaculture planning and aquaculture goals for a given state or region, where available, and should include the potential impact of aquaculture on other coastal businesses. Support of Sea Grant capacity (staff) is eligible for funding to realize competition goals.

Standard limitations to the use of Sea Grant funds apply (e.g. funds cannot be used for construction or the purchase of boats, etc.) and funds cannot be used for direct aid or for the benefit of a single business or individual. Purchase of equipment for projects involving multiple stakeholders may be allowable. Note: equipment costing over \$5,000 will require a lease vs. purchase analysis.

Application Requirements:

Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007550](#), available at [Grants.gov](#), required elements of the application, how to submit, general programmatic priorities and selection factors, and other necessary information. Submit your application to **SPECIAL PROJECTS "D"** under this Opportunity in Grants.gov.

Due to recent updates to 2 CFR 200, please be sure to download all new standard forms from Grants.gov when preparing your application package.

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 should include the following documents:*

- a. Project Description. The total number of pages in the application description should not exceed ten (10). The narrative format should use a 12-pt font with 1" margins. Applicants need not fill the entire 10-page maximum for the application description. References, CVs, and letters of support do not contribute to the page limit.
 - i. Cover page
 - Lead and participating Sea Grant Programs, Project title(s) and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of PI(s) and co-PI(s), including investigators not part of a Sea Grant Program.
 - Budget overview - Total cost and annual breakdown of requested funding of project.
 - ii. Background information including description of need(s) to be addressed by project.
 - iii. Description of proposed activities, objectives, and methods to realize competition goals described above.
 - iv. Anticipated outcomes and deliverables.
 - v. Project timelines
 - Please provide a timeline for accomplishing project objectives. 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. Projects 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.
 - vi. Diversity statement (for overall application)
 - NSGO recognizes it has a particular and unique opportunity to support NOAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion by taking an intentional step that encourages applicants to consider diversity and inclusion as part of their scientific projects. This action has the potential to make an impact on not only the diversity and inclusion in science at NOAA, but also in the equity of services provided by NOAA. In this section, describe how the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identities, sexual orientation, disability, geography, etc.) and how they benefit from its outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to review Sea Grant's vision and priority action plan for advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice: <https://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visiting/DiversityInclusion>
 - vii. References (does not count towards page limit)

- viii. CVs (two page limit per each CV) of principal and co-principal investigators (does not count towards page limit). CVs of other investigators and partners are optional.
 - ix. Letters of support (optional, does not count against page limit).
 - x. Current and pending support (not required, if included does not count towards page limit)
- b. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)
- i. Applicants must ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full **for each project included in the overall application** 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.
 - ii. The questionnaire can be found here:
<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>.
 - iii. Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire can be found under the NEPA Compliance section here:
<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Forms/NEPA%20Questionnaire%20-%20Guidance.pdf>
- c. Data Management Plan
- i. All projects included in the application **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."
- d. Demographics Information
- NOAA will not provide collected demographics information to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.
- i. Please provide the following anonymous information for all named collaborators on your proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035) You may use [this optional form](#) for collecting the information. Submission to this form would count as fulfillment of this requirement, but please include a statement in your application materials that this requirement was fulfilled and in what manner.
 - ii. 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

2. Budget Narrative. *The Budget Narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification) in the following 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 and each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Years 1-2). Guidance on filling out these forms is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).

b. Budget Justifications

For each year of each 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 budget 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)

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](#), OMB Control No. 4040-0006)

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. SF-424B Assurances ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), OMB Control No. 4040-0007)
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)
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
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 Funding Opportunity announcement. Proposals submitted to this competition will be evaluated by at least three independent written reviews based on:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of the proposed work relative to program priorities (25%). This criterion ascertains whether the proposed work is relevant to the described program priorities described above.
2. Technical merit and project impact (35%). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, whether there are clear project goals and objectives, and potential impact of the project on the competition priorities.
3. Overall qualifications/expertise of applicants (10%). This criterion evaluates whether applicants possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
4. Project costs (5%). This criterion analyzes the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.
5. Outreach and Education (25%). 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.

Please note that selected projects will be recommended for funding only if they have a complete application package and if funds are available.

Other Information:

Reporting:

Given that these projects will span FY2023 and FY2024 (two distinct omnibus years), these projects will be stand-alone, non-omnibus awards. Annual progress reporting in the form of the Research Performance Progress Report will be required.

Once applications have been recommended 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 recommended for funding. 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 opportunity should be directed to NSGO Aquaculture Managers Chuck Weirich or Mark Rath at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov. Please specify that your question is related to the “FY 2023 Aquaculture Workforce Development Support Projects” in the subject line.

Fillable versions of required Sea Grant forms can be found here:
<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>