

Questions & Answers on Sea Grant's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Marine Debris Funding Opportunities

QUESTION: Where does the funding come from?

ANSWER: Funding for these opportunities was provided through the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#).

QUESTION: How much money will be available for Sea Grant's funding opportunities?

ANSWER: Sea Grant expects that up to a total of \$19 million will be available for these funding opportunities. These funding opportunities will use funds appropriated for both FY 2022 and FY 2023.

QUESTION: When will grants be awarded?

ANSWER: Sea Grant expects to review proposals in winter 2024 and make project selections in Spring 2024.

QUESTION: How is the full \$50 million appropriated to Sea Grant through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law being allocated?

ANSWER: Of the \$50 million, 19 million was allocated to projects in FY22 and FY23, and \$19 million is being offered through the current FY24 opportunity. The remaining \$12 million will be allocated through a future competition. An additional \$8.5 million was leveraged from the Inflation Reduction Act to support meritorious projects.

QUESTION: What individuals or entities are eligible to apply for funding?

ANSWER: As outlined in the funding opportunities, eligible applicants are Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs.

Other interested entities must submit letters of intent and proposals in partnership with and through a relevant Sea Grant program. Please note that it is not a requirement that investigators, including the PI, are part of a Sea Grant program; however, proposals must be submitted with and through a Sea Grant program.

Letters of intent are required in order to be eligible to submit a full proposal. Letters of intent or applications that do not come through a Sea Grant program will be rejected without review.

QUESTION: How many awards will be granted and what is the average award size for these funding opportunities?

ANSWER: For the Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions opportunity, Sea Grant expects to support approximately 10-20 Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions. Each award will be no greater than \$300,000.

For the Marine Debris Challenge Competition opportunity, Sea Grant expects to fund approximately 5-12 projects of up to three years duration. Sea Grant expects the average project size will be between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000; however, applications may request up to \$3,000,000 in federal funds addressing the program priorities.

The exact amount of funds to be awarded and the number of awards made will be at the discretion of NOAA following pre-award negotiations with highly meritorious applicants.

QUESTION: Can the Sea Grant waive any matching fund requirements?

ANSWER: There is no matching requirement for these competitions. However, cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support will make projects more competitive. Applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal

funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. Cost sharing and leverage of other funds is an element considered in the evaluation criteria.

QUESTION: How will the funding opportunities support Administration environmental justice priorities?

ANSWER: Sea Grant will encourage applicants and awardees to support the principles of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility when writing their proposals and performing their work. In alignment with the Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, all applicants are asked to describe how their proposed project will advance equity and inclusion. Greater consideration will be given to projects that propose to work in areas with disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized.

QUESTION: What is the geographic focus of the funding opportunities?

ANSWER: Partnerships awarded through these competitions are expected to be responsive to marine debris needs throughout all coastal and marine areas in the United States, including the Great Lakes, United States territories, and Freely Associated States.

QUESTION: How do these funding opportunities differ from the other habitat conservation and restoration funding opportunities related to marine debris that NOAA is providing through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act?

ANSWER: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law presents an unprecedented opportunity to enhance coastal resilience and habitat restoration efforts across the country. The act provides roughly [\\$3 billion over five years for NOAA](#), with significant funding available for habitat restoration, conservation, and resilience efforts.

The act appropriated \$150 million over 5 years to NOAA for “marine debris assessment, prevention, mitigation, and removal” from FY 2022 through FY 2026.

In FY 2022 and 2023, the NOAA Marine Debris Program provided up to \$56 million in funding through a grant competition with two separate priorities. This [funding opportunity](#) prioritizes removing large marine debris and using proven interception technologies to capture marine debris.

QUESTION: How are the marine debris funding opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act being coordinated across NOAA?

ANSWER: The NOAA Marine Debris Program is working with NOAA Sea Grant on marine debris to coordinate activities and share information in order to reduce duplication and identify opportunities for collaboration. Through the various funding elements of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we will continue to work closely with our NOAA partners to coordinate efforts and make a collective impact.