



National Sea Grant College Program

Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2024 and Beyond (Allocation Policy)

June 2024

I. Overview

This policy guides the allocation of federally appropriated funds to the various elements of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant). An allocation policy is required for the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) to justify its recommendations for funding actions to the NOAA Grants Management Division. It also provides transparency for the allocation of funds to the Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs-defined in the *National Sea Grant College Program Status Policy for the Development and Advancement of Sea Grant Projects, Coherent Area Programs, Institutional Programs, and College Programs* ([Program Status Policy](#)) (hereafter referred to as Sea Grant programs). An allocation policy ensures that the NSGO meets its statutory requirements and provides the framework for Sea Grant to achieve its mission to enhance the use and conservation of coastal, marine and Great Lakes resources to create a strong and sustainable economy, a healthy environment, and resilient and inclusive communities. The NSGO reviews this *Allocation Policy* periodically.

This update is grounded significantly on the previous policy - *National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2014 and Beyond*. The changes are intended to recognize the impacts of inflation and address an evolving appropriations landscape (e.g., increase in the direction of funds to specific purposes/needs by Congress). Recommendations for this policy were provided by the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Advisory Board) and included input from the Sea Grant programs and the NSGO.

This document includes details on the following:

- **History**
- **Legislative Direction**
- **Goals**
- **Allocation of Funds to Program Elements**
- **Distribution of Funds among Program Elements**

For the purpose of this document and consistent Sea Grant terminology (see Section

V.B. for further details):

- Sea Grant base funding is the initial allocation provided to a Sea Grant program from the Sea Grant yearly federal appropriation.
- Sea Grant programs also receive a yearly merit allocation determined after each site visit cycle, as defined in the *National Sea Grant College Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) Policy*.
- Sea Grant core funding is defined as the sum of the base + merit + non-federal match.

II. History

The allocation of Sea Grant funds has a long history dating back to the establishment of the National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966. The current distribution of funds among the Sea Grant programs represents an evolution of a series of complex decisions that date back to Sea Grant's beginning. See Appendix A for a Timeline of Sea Grant Major Events.

The National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966 provided little guidance for the distribution of Sea Grant funds. This legislation provided the National Science Foundation (NSF), the agency then assigned to administer Sea Grant, broad latitude regarding the distribution of funds with only one requirement—that “no state¹ should receive more than 15% of total appropriated funds.” Absent legislative guidance, the NSF and then NOAA, applied peer review and open competition principles to establish a network of Sea Grant Institutional and College Programs. Funding allocations among the states followed these same principles as the network grew, tempered by the desire to maintain a stable base of funding for the already-established Sea Grant programs. Today, the distribution of funds among Sea Grant programs represents the evolution of a series of complex decisions that date to Sea Grant's beginning in 1966. Appendix B is a tabular summary of the history of changes.

Starting in the late 1990's, major management changes were introduced to Sea Grant in response to the *1994 National Research Council study* (see Appendix B) that called for a more decentralized organizational structure and greater focus on performance. The management changes were accompanied by revisions in the process used to distribute Sea Grant funds among the Sea Grant programs, introduced formally in 1998 (*Allocations for FY 1998 and Beyond*), and included the following:

- Base funding was set to the level each program received in FY 1995.
- National Strategic Investments (NSIs), national competitions open to all programs, were initiated.

¹ The term “state” is used throughout this document as defined in the Sea Grant Act: “any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States.”

- The concept of supplementing base funding with performance-based merit funding (resulting in base + merit) determined through rigorous evaluations.
- Two operating guidelines were established to further define the program:
 - Approximately 50% of the federal funds allocated to program were to be used to support peer-reviewed research and education projects awarded competitively; and
 - No more than 10% of the funding within the program's omnibus grant could be designated for program development purposes in any one year.

Following the 2002 reauthorization of Sea Grant, a revised policy document *Sea Grant Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2003 and Beyond* (see Appendix B) was developed by a joint committee of the National Sea Grant Review Panel, the Sea Grant Association (SGA), and the NSGO to guide the allocation of appropriated funds in a manner consistent with the new legislation. The new policy maintained many of the principles and much of the guidance presented in the 1998 document but also included several new concepts including:

- A minimum base funding target level of \$1.2M for each Sea Grant Institutional and College Program;
- Program Development Awards² to enhance specific Sea Grant program activities; and
- Provisions for the development and funding of new programs. Base funding for the programs was reset to the level each program received in FY 2003.

In the decade that followed, state austerity budgets coupled with years of relatively flat federal funding and continued inflation, resulted in the inability of the NSGO to implement a program minimum base of \$1.2M and to support many other desired initiatives. It also increased the financial pressure on all Sea Grant programs.

In 2010, the Advisory Board was asked to take a fresh look at Sea Grant's Allocation Policy with the objective "*to develop policies and criteria for allocating Sea Grant funding resources that will be consistent with Sea Grant's legislative authority and maximize the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the Sea Grant.*" Two joint subcommittees, including members from the Advisory Board, the SGA, and the NSGO, addressed this issue. The first subcommittee reported back to the Advisory Board in September 2011 with a framework for allocation, and the second subcommittee developed that framework into recommendations for implementation in 2013 (*National Sea Grant Allocation Committee #3: Report to the National Sea Grant Advisory Board*;

² Program Development Awards are grants made based on peer reviewed, national competitions open *only to Sea Grant* Institutional and College Programs and are for the purpose of enhancing specific programmatic activities (e.g., community development, fisheries extension, regional activities). These funds are designated as part of a program's core funds for a finite time period (generally four to five years) and are subject to the terms and conditions specified in the competition. These awards are different from the program development project that is a part of each Sea Grant program's omnibus submission.

see Appendix B).

Through this process, the Advisory Board noted that the extended period of flat federal and state budgets had been especially difficult for the smaller programs that have less ability to absorb inflation and budget cuts, and included the following:

- The concept of a minimum level of annual base funding was reaffirmed (with the recommendation of an annual minimum of \$800K for the numbers to work within existing appropriations). That target was subsequently increased to \$1M by the director of Sea Grant/NSGO (Director).
- It was also recommended that about three-quarters of the Sea Grant appropriation should be dedicated to base, merit, and regional funding with the remainder to be set aside to support national activities.
- The most significant recommended policy change was to shift the primary determinant of base funding allocation among the programs to more equitably reflect constituent needs as represented by coastal population and shoreline (Appendix C).

The report was transmitted to the Director and was followed by an extensive dialogue on whether and how to implement the recommendations. Based on that discussion, the implementation plan was modified substantially to ensure that the movement toward funding that considered coastal population and shoreline would only occur as the overall pool of base funding increased, acknowledging the desire to do no harm to existing programs. In 2014, these principles were codified in the *Sea Grant Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2014 and Beyond* (see Appendix B).

Since the implementation of the FY 2014 Allocation Policy, Sea Grant has seen a significant increase in annual appropriations that have allowed for increases to the base budgets of existing programs, and the advancement of several new programs from Project and Coherent Area Program status to Institutional and College Program status. Although these funds remain below the level needed to fully address constituent needs. A significant increase in Sea Grant appropriations in FY 2014 provided an opportunity to increase total base funding by \$3.7M to allow all Institutional and College Programs to achieve the minimum annual target of \$1M, and to provide modest additional support to programs based on the coastal population and shoreline used to define constituent need. The merit funding pool was also increased by \$803K in FY 2014. An additional \$1.65M was committed to base increases in FY 2018. This was followed by an additional \$3.4M increase in FY 2020 that was committed as \$100K base increases for each program to partially account for inflationary cost increases since FY 2015.

In addition, since the FY 2014 Allocation Policy was published, other relevant Sea Grant policies have been updated. In 2022, an Advisory Board subcommittee recommended and the NSGO implemented a revision to the [Sea Grant Competitive Research](#)

[Allocation Policy](#). This update changed the expectation from a minimum of 40% of core funding (base + merit) be directed by each program to competitive research and education, to 30-50% of the core funding (base + merit + non-federal match) to provide greater flexibility to the programs.

In FY 2023, the NSGO gave notice to the programs of its intent to provide additional base increases totaling \$6.77M beginning in FY 2024. These actions ensured that all programs:

- could meet a \$1.2M annual minimum funding level target,
- receive base increases to keep pace with inflation between 2015 and 2022 (this was achieved for all but three programs, as appropriated funds were insufficient to achieve this goal for all programs), and
- see some modest additional adjustment to funding levels to address the coastal population and shoreline metrics.

The FY 2024 base funding allocation provided by the NSGO to each Sea Grant program is considered to be the new base funding level (Appendix D). Future adjustments to base funding will be addressed following the guidelines set out in this policy, and adjustments to merit funding will be considered following each full evaluation cycle as outlined in the *PIE Policy*.

III. Legislative Direction

This section outlines the driving statutory language from the National Sea Grant College Program Act, as amended in 2020 (Sea Grant Act) ([33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.](#)) pertaining to general guidance for the distribution of funds authorized in section 1123(d)(3)(B) as follows:

(3) With respect to sea grant colleges, sea grant institutes, sea grant programs, and sea grant projects, the Director shall—

(B) subject to the availability of appropriations, allocate funding among sea grant colleges, sea grant institutes, sea grant programs, and sea grant projects so as to—

- (i) promote healthy competition among sea grant colleges and institutes;*
- (ii) encourage collaborations among sea grant colleges and sea grant institutes to address regional and national priorities established under subsection (c)(1);*
- (iii) ensure successful implementation of sea grant programs;*
- (iv) to the maximum extent consistent with other provisions of this subchapter, provide a stable base of funding for sea grant colleges and institutes;*
- (v) encourage and promote coordination and cooperation between the research, education, and outreach programs of the Administration and those of academic institutions; and*
- (vi) encourage cooperation with Minority Serving Institutions to enhance collaborative research opportunities and increase the number of such*

students graduating in NOAA science areas; and ...

IV. Goals

Consistent with the intent of Congress as set forth in the Sea Grant Act, and drawing from previous allocation policies, this updated policy is intended to support the following goals:

- 1) To support Sea Grant's legislative mandate to promote the wise use and conservation of coastal and marine resources by strengthening existing programs and developing new programs as appropriate.
- 2) To provide a stable, national infrastructure of Sea Grant programs that accomplish Sea Grant's mission effectively and efficiently.
- 3) To foster a high level of innovation, educational and scientific quality, and program impact.
- 4) To support a consistent level of excellence in the Sea Grant network nationwide.
- 5) To provide a rational, transparent, and flexible allocation plan that promotes performance, healthy competition and partnerships.
- 6) To support NOAA's mission priorities.

V. Allocation of Funds to Program Elements

A. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to describe the operational program elements that make up Sea Grant and are impacted by this *Allocation Policy*.

Sea Grant appropriations are provided by Congress through budget lines in the federal budget known as Program, Project, and Activity (PPA) lines. Currently, Sea Grant has two PPAs in annual appropriations, the National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant PPA) and the Sea Grant Aquaculture Research (Sea Grant Aquaculture PPA), funded in FY 2024 at \$80M and \$14M, respectively.

At times there may also be Congressionally-directed appropriations within the Sea Grant PPAs. In addition, all Sea Grant annual appropriations provided through these two PPAs are subject to Sea Grant's legislatively mandated non-federal 50% cost-share (match) (\$1 in non-federal funds for every \$2 in federal funds), unless specifically noted differently in Sea Grant's authorizing or appropriations language. Congressionally mandated waivers to non-federal match may be considered during the federal financial assistance application process, if applicable.

Appropriations from the Sea Grant PPA are predominately allocated to the Sea Grant

programs through multi-year Omnibus grants to support implementation of the programs' strategic plans and locally/regionally identified priorities. There are four Sea Grant status steps: Projects, Coherent Area Programs, Institutional Programs, and College Programs; as defined in the *Program Status Policy*. Each status step is important to Sea Grant achieving its mission and strategic goals, and increases associated with status changes are funded through the Sea Grant PPA. The Sea Grant PPA is also used to support congressionally-directed work, national and regional programming, fellowships, Sea Grant NOAA-wide activities, national administrative activities, and the Advisory Board consistent with Sea Grant's authorizing language. The Sea Grant Aquaculture PPA is used to support national, regional and local aquaculture initiatives through both the Sea Grant programs and competitions open to all applicants.

In addition to annual appropriations, Sea Grant at times receives separate, directed appropriations such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and disaster supplemental funding. These funds are often excluded from the standard Sea Grant non-federal match requirement and strongly directed by Congress and the Administration.

Finally, Sea Grant is legislatively directed to develop partnerships to carry out its mission. Sea Grant has continued to grow partnerships that support Sea Grant's mission. Partnership activities may take many forms, and many result in the transfer of federal funds to Sea Grant programs to engage in addressing strategic priorities that are of interest to both Sea Grant and the partner agency/organization. Partnerships may be explored and initiated by Sea Grant programs, the NSGO, and by partners working with individual Sea Grant programs or the NSGO. These funds carry their own requirements, and may have reduced or no non-federal match.

B. Allocation Guidelines and Principles for Program Elements

1. Core Funding: Sea Grant core funding is defined as the sum of the base + merit + non-federal match. Core funding is awarded directly to individual Sea Grant programs through a multi-year Omnibus grant that establishes a cooperative agreement between the federal government and each Sea Grant program. As an operational guideline, a minimum of 75% of funds appropriated to the Sea Grant PPA will be reserved for core support of the Sea Grant programs, with approximately 65% allocated as base funding and a goal of 10% as merit funding, a level significant enough to reward performance.

- a. **Base Funding:** Sea Grant base funding is the initial allocation provided to a Sea Grant program from the Sea Grant yearly federal appropriation. Base funding represents NOAA's investment to support locally driven research, extension and

education and directly addresses the requirement for a stable base of funding as required by the Sea Grant Act. Base funding is awarded with the expectation of continued long-term support pending regular evaluation (see *PIE Policy*). Target funding levels are provided as soon as feasible for Omnibus proposal planning, with actual levels of base funding dependent on the Sea Grant appropriations available for a given fiscal year.

The starting point for Sea Grant program base funding levels for this *Allocation Policy* update is FY 2024. These are determined by historical base funding levels with modifications based on previous allocation principles. A program's initial base funding level is determined at the time of entry into the Sea Grant network.

The principles for determining annual base funding adjustments for FY 2024 and beyond are outlined below. They are guided by the overall desire to maintain the integrity and coherence of the Sea Grant network.

- i. **Do no harm, provide at least FY 2024 funding level, federal appropriations permitting.** This principle recognizes historical precedent, the reality that available funding is limited, and that Sea Grant programs have evolved infrastructures over time consistent with their funding levels. Increases in base funding for individual programs will generally only occur when the overall pool of base funding increases. Programs should expect to be funded at least at the FY 2024 base funding level (Appendix D), assuming satisfactory performance (see *PIE Policy*), unless there are insufficient federal fiscal resources or changes to current agency policy and federal regulations. This goal may not be able to be achieved if total appropriations decrease, but it will be a priority to minimize decreases to the program base to the greatest degree possible if appropriations levels decrease, while ensuring that mandatory requirements are fulfilled.
- ii. **Program base minimum funding in federal funds is maintained, federal appropriations permitting.** A second principle is to ensure that each Institutional and College Program receives at least the program base minimum level of federal funding (\$1.2M in FY 2024). It is important to note that the base minimum defined here is not to be construed as an adequate or sufficient resource base in relation to a program's constituent needs, opportunities, or capabilities. However, given budget realities, it represents a compromise between providing an enabling infrastructure for all existing programs and providing more substantial funding for a smaller number of programs. As all eligible programs meet or exceed the \$1.2M minimum in FY 2024, this will generally be applied only to new programs advancing to the Institutional or College Program status.
- iii. **Inflation adjustments will be made periodically, federal**

appropriations permitting. A third principle is to support programs' ability to keep up with inflationary pressures on their base budget. FY 2024 will be used as the baseline from which these calculations are made.

Inflationary adjustments should not be expected every year that there is positive inflation, but rather when increased appropriations are available at a level (e.g., \$50K per program) that exceeds the administrative effort of preparation and processing of the grants.

- iv. **Program increases will consider coastal population and shoreline, federal appropriations permitting.** A fourth principle is to provide increases in base funding that reflect coastal population and shoreline. Such adjustments would be made after determining the pool of funds available for such increases following the process in Appendix C. These allocations are made consistent with best practice, that is, when the funds to be disbursed reach a dollar threshold (e.g., \$50K per program) that exceeds the administrative effort of preparation and processing of the grants.

- b. **Merit Funding:** Sea Grant programs receive a yearly merit allocation determined after each site visit cycle, as defined in the *PIE Policy*. Merit funding is awarded to recognize and reward performance by College and Institutional Programs. A program's merit-based distribution will be adjusted every four years following the performance review cycle, and may also be adjusted mid-cycle if funds are available. It is expected that the overall merit funding pool will be increased over time as funding permits to reach 10% of the Sea Grant PPA appropriation.

2. National and Regional Funding: National and regional funding supports the responsibilities outlined in Sea Grant Act and the U.S.Code of Federal Regulations [15 CFR 917](#) and [15 CFR 918](#) (Code of Regulations), which include: new project/program development and advancement, national and regional programming, fellowships, the NSGO, and the Advisory Board. As an operational guideline, a maximum of 25% of funds appropriated to the Sea Grant PPA will be reserved for these activities which are at the discretion of the Director to support:

- a. **New Project/Program Funding:** New project/program funding may be used to extend Sea Grant to serve all eligible geographical areas as defined in the Sea Grant Act. The Sea Grant Act statement of purpose includes "*extending and strengthening the national sea grant program*" and assigns the Director the duty to "*encourage the establishment and growth of Sea Grant programs*" (see *Program Status Policy*).

The Director may provide new funds from Sea Grant appropriations for investments in eligible Projects and Coherent Area Programs in geographic

areas in which no program has yet attained Institutional status. Once a program has attained full Institutional status, it no longer qualifies for distributions under the new program provision. Institutional Programs qualify for base minimum distributions and, after undergoing evaluation, merit funding.

It is at the discretion of the Director as to how to balance investment in new projects/programs with the core principles of this policy to support existing projects/programs.

- i. **National and Regional Programming:** The Sea Grant Act gives the Director the authority to provide support for national or regional strategic investments in fields relating to ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources. Although these investments may be made competitively, it is not a requirement of the Sea Grant Act. In fact, the Director is charged with allocating funding to both “*promote healthy competition*” and “*encourage collaborations ... to address regional and national priorities.*” Allocations to programs may be made under this provision for a finite time-period on the basis of peer-reviewed competition to eligible entities as defined by law. Allocations can also be made to programs as a noncompetitive institutional supplement to their annual funding, as appropriate, for the purpose of enhancing specific programmatic activities (e.g., rapid response funds, regional activities, coastal adaptation and resilience). Funding for such investments may arise from Sea Grant appropriations and/or other sources distributed by the NSGO in accordance with provisions of the Sea Grant Act.

The rules and policies in effect for each national and regional strategic investment are specified in each funding announcement.

- ii. **Fellowships:** The Sea Grant Act calls for Sea Grant to support student fellowships, including the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship. In addition to the Knauss Fellowship, in FY 2024 the NSGO also provides support for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)/Sea Grant Fellowship in Marine Resource Economics, the NMFS/Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and the Sea Grant network run Community Engaged Internship (CEI) to engage underserved students in Sea Grant related training opportunities. In addition, the NSGO may provide support for Sea Grant network educational and workforce development activities and many Sea Grant programs provide support for state-based marine, coastal and Great Lakes science and policy fellowships.
- iii. **NOAA-Wide Activities and National Administration:** These funds are

used to support government-wide investments in Small Business Innovation Research and the Hollings Scholarship as required by law, the Advisory Board, and the NSGO (currently capped at 5.5% of appropriations per the Sea Grant Act).

- iv. **Special Provisions:** There are special case distributions that are provided for under the Sea Grant Act which represent situations requiring clarification. These include pass-through grants and contracts, special grants, and unobligated funds.
1. **Pass-through Grants and Contracts** are funds awarded by the NSGO to Sea Grant programs arising from funds not appropriated specifically for the support of the Sea Grant Act. Such funds are subject to the terms and conditions of the originating agency/entity. Pass-through funds do not require non-federal matching funds unless specified by the originating agency/entity.
 2. **Special Grants** are funds awarded under Section 1124(b) of the Sea Grant Act that do not require non-federal matching funds and may not exceed 5% of the total appropriated funds in that year. Per the language in the Sea Grant Act, such grants are made under the following conditions: there are no reasonable means available through which the applicant can meet the non-federal matching requirement; the probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such non-federal matching requirement; and the same or equivalent benefit cannot be obtained through the award of a contract or grant under the 50% non-federal match requirement (examples include the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship or a regional project that meets the above criteria). Proposals for special grants are subject to normal review processes in accordance with NSGO guidelines.
 3. **Unobligated Funds** are those arising from previous years' de-obligations. These are returns that originate from a variety of sources and normally are less than 1% of current year appropriations. Such funds become available for distribution by NSGO and may be used at the discretion of the Director to augment one or more funding elements. These funds are available for distribution only in the year they occur (i.e., on a one-time basis) and unless otherwise exempted, are subject to Sea Grant's legislatively mandated 50% non-federal match of Section 1124 of the Sea Grant Act.

VI. Distribution of Funds among the Program Elements

This section addresses the distribution of funds to the specific Program Elements described in Section V for FY 2024 and beyond until revised:

- A. Sea Grant's FY 2024 appropriation was \$80M for the Sea Grant PPA and an additional \$14M for Sea Grant Aquaculture PPA.
- B. As an operational guideline, at least 75% of appropriations in the Sea Grant PPA will be reserved for direct support of the Sea Grant programs via Core funding (described above).
- C. As an operational guideline, no more than 25% of the Sea Grant PPA will be reserved for national and regional funding (described above) and administrative functions of the NSGO under the 5.5% administrative cap.
- D. Designation of appropriated funds within these guidelines will be made by the Director as soon as possible after an appropriation bill is passed for the fiscal year.
- E. In general, movement toward the target percentage distributions of funding will occur as appropriations are increased, not through reallocation of the existing pools.
- F. This *Allocation Policy* will be reviewed by the NSGO following each reauthorization. Both the Advisory Board and Sea Grant programs will be given the opportunity to participate in such a review.

Finally, this policy is based on the assumption of long-term program funding growth. However, assumptions of constant or growing funding may not be realized in a particular year for a variety of reasons and/or there may be congressional direction regarding expenditures. The following guidelines establish a general protocol for such situations:

- A. In the event of a significant decrease in the overall pool of available Sea Grant funding, the first priority is the maintenance of network integrity and therefore the maintenance of core funding levels.
- B. In the event of a significant increase in the overall pool of available Sea Grant funding, primary consideration will be given to program core funding based on the principles of minimum base, inflation adjustment, program specific metrics of coastal population and shoreline (as outlined above), the merit funding pool, new program development and national and regional strategic investments, taking into account the above guidelines for the Distribution of Funds among Program Elements.

VII. Effective Date

This policy is effective upon release of this document and will continue indefinitely until superseded or updated.

Appendix A - Timeline of Sea Grant Major Events

1963	Athelstan Spilhaus first publicly suggested the Sea Grant idea during the keynote address of the 93rd annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1966	President Lyndon Johnson signed the bill, establishing the Sea Grant Program through The National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966.
1968	The work of Sea Grant begins as the first grants are awarded and the National Review Panel is established.
1970	Sea Grant became part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The National Sea Grant Depository (Library) is established as an information center dedicated to the collection, storage, documentation, and dissemination of Sea Grant literature.
1971	Four universities are the first to achieve Sea Grant College status: Oregon State University, University of Rhode Island, Texas A & M University, and University of Washington.
1972	University of Hawaii and University of Wisconsin achieve College status. University of Southern California becomes an Institutional Program.
1973	University of California achieves College status.
1975	State University of New York and Cornell University achieve College status.
1976	The National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966 is amended by the Sea Grant Improvement Act. The amendment strengthens the basic program of the original Act and codifies the National Sea Grant Review Panel. University of Delaware, State University System of Florida, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and University of North Carolina achieve College status.
1978	Louisiana State University achieves College status.
1979	The Sea Grant Intern Program is initiated, allowing outstanding graduate students to spend one year in Washington, D.C., developing the skills needed for active leadership in both policy development and research in coastal and ocean sciences.
1980	University of Alaska, University of Georgia, and University of Maine/University of New Hampshire achieve College status.
1982	University of Maryland, University of Michigan/ Michigan State University, and Mississippi/ Alabama Consortium achieve College status
1984	Virginia Graduate Marine Science Consortium achieves College status.
1985	University of Minnesota achieves College status; Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution becomes an Institutional Program.
1986	South Carolina Consortium achieves College status.
1987	National Sea Grant College Program Authorization Act of 1987 passed. The Sea Grant Intern Program was renamed the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship in honor of Dean Knauss, one of the founding fathers of Sea Grant.
1988	The Ohio State University and the University of Connecticut achieve College status.
1989	New Jersey Marine Science Consortium and University of Puerto Rico achieve College status.
1991	National Sea Grant College Program Authorization Act of 1991 passed. Administration of the Act not to exceed listed dollar amounts.

1994	Programs were granted the ability to review research proposals themselves and select projects for funding. Program Assessment Team (PAT) History: 1994 Ocean Studies Board's report "NSGO should evaluate the success of each state program on a four-year cycle, using, in part, retrospective information on recent achievements, based on measures for each of the three areas of research, education and outreach."
1997	University of Illinois/ Purdue University achieves College status.
1998	National Sea Grant College Program Reauthorization Act of 1998 passed, including administration of Act set to 5% instead of a dollar amount. NOAA celebrates Sea Grant's 30th anniversary. A performance-based evaluation system is established (PAT system). Resources allocated to programs are determined in part by performance. In four years, all programs will be evaluated by a performance assessment team. National Strategic Investments introduced.
1999	Sea Grant and NOAA Fisheries established a Graduate Fellowship Program in population dynamics and marine resource economics.
2002	National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 signed into law after unanimous passage in both houses of Congress – adding language regarding a National Academy of Sciences study of the evaluation and rating system, as well as rating of programs according to their relative performance.
2003	University of New Hampshire achieves College status. Second cycle of PATs begins.
2004	University of Maine achieves College status.
2006	National Research Council report on the PAT system.
2008	National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2008 passed changing the National Sea Grant Review Panel to the National Sea Grant Advisory Board and removed language regarding rating of programs according to their relative performance.
2009	Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) System begins: First time all College Programs' Strategic Plans aligned with the National Sea Grant College Program 2009 - 2013 Strategic Plan.
2014	1000th Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship awarded; Virginia Institute of Marine Science at the College of William & Mary achieves College status.
2016	Pennsylvania State University achieves College status.
2016	NOAA celebrates Sea Grant's 50th anniversary commemorating five decades of accomplishments in research, education, and outreach related to coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources.
2018	Lake Champlain becomes an Institutional Program.
2018	PIE System updated: based on the Advisory Board PIE II Assessment Committee recommended revisions to improve and streamline the process, where possible.
2019	The National Sea Grant Law Center achieves Coherent Area Program status.
2020	The National Sea Grant College Program Act, as amended in 2020 (Sea Grant Act) (33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.) was passed.
2021	National Sea Grant Library (NSGL) at University of Rhode Island (URI) begins transitioning its digital collection to the NOAA Central Library. Sea Grant Collection at the NOAA Central Library is established as an information center dedicated to the collection, storage, documentation, and dissemination of Sea Grant literature.
2021	Independent Review Panel (IRP) implemented for the first time to assess the National Sea Grant Office and National Sea Grant College Program overall.
2022	National Sea Grant Library project (NSGL) sunsetted.
2022	University of Guam becomes an Institutional Program.

Appendix B - Tabular History of Changes to Program Allocation

Year	Document or Policy	Guiding Principle	Reference Base Funding Level	Minimum Funding Level
1966	National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966	No state should receive more than 15% of total appropriated funds (NSF established peer review and open competition principles)		
1994	National Research Council Study	Concept of supplementing base funding with performance-based merit funding (through rigorous evaluation)		
1998	Allocations for FY 1998 and Beyond (first <i>Allocation Policy</i>)	Two operating guidelines established: 1) Approximately 50% of federal funds allocated to a program be used for competitive, peer-reviewed research and education projects 2) No more than 10% can be used for program development Also introduced National Strategic Investments (NSIs)	1995	
2003	Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2003 and Beyond	Three additional principals: 1) Minimum base funding target introduced 2) Program Development* awards 3) Provisions for new programs	2003	\$1.2M (goal - not reached)
2013	National Sea Grant Allocation Committee #3 Report to the NSGO	Reaffirmed concept of annual minimum Recommended 75% of SG appropriation dedicated to base, merit, and regional funding Primary determinant for base allocation became constituent need - represented by coastal population and shoreline; to be implemented only as overall base pool increased Principle of "do not harm"		\$1M**
2014	Sea Grant Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2014 and Beyond	Codified 2013 report recommendations		\$1M
2022	Advisory Board Research Subcommittee	Changed Allocation Policy for competitive research and education to 30-50%		
2023	National Sea Grant Office	All programs now meet minimum \$1.2M; first instance of applying constituent need criteria as well as inflation	2024	1.2M

2023	National Sea Grant Allocation Committee #3 Report to the NSGO	<p>Reaffirmed concept of annual minimum</p> <p>Reaffirmed recommended minimum of 75% of SG appropriation dedicated to base, merit, and regional funding</p> <p>Determinants for base allocation (a) “do no harm” to existing programs; (b) ensure “base minimum” is maintained; (c) adjust for inflation; and (d) adjust for constituent need - represented by coastal population and shoreline; to be implemented as possible as the overall base pool increases</p>		
2024	Sea Grant Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2024 and Beyond	Codified 2023 National Sea Grant Allocation Committee #3 Report recommendations	2024	\$1.2M

* Program Development Awards are grants made based on peer reviewed, national competitions open *only to Sea Grant* Institutional and College Programs and are for the purpose of enhancing specific programmatic activities (e.g., community development, fisheries extension, regional activities). These funds are designated as part of a program’s core funds for a finite time period (generally four to five years) and are subject to the terms and conditions specified in the competition. These awards are different from the program development project that is a part of each Sea Grant program’s omnibus submission.

** Note - Recommendation was \$800K; Director raised to \$1M.

Appendix C - Calculations Used to Determine Allocation Increases

The FY 2024 base funding amounts for Sea Grant programs (Appendix D) were determined by adjusting for inflation between 2015 and 2022, adding coastal resilience funds and adjusting for coastal population and shoreline as included in *Sea Grant Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2014 and Beyond* and this policy update. The FY 2014 Policy provided the starting numbers that were used when adjusting inflation for the FY 2024 base funding amounts. The following processes were used to make these adjustments and will be used as appropriate moving forward.

C.1 Inflation Calculations

Inflation data was gathered from the [CPI Inflation Calculator](#) provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The inflation rate was calculated and compared to the flat base increases program's received between 2014 and 2022. Where the rates of increases kept up with inflation, no adjustments were made. However, for several programs the rate of inflation had not been maintained. In these instances, the first consideration for a base increase was to maintain the rate of inflation. Base increases were provided to all programs with the 2024 allocations (Appendix D) to keep pace with inflation between 2015 and 2022 (this was achieved for all but three programs, as appropriated funds were insufficient to achieve this goal for all programs).

C.2 Coastal Population and Shoreline

The 2013 Allocation Committee report recommended a policy change which shifted the primary determinant of base funding allocation among the programs to more equitably reflect constituent needs as represented by coastal population and shoreline. The 2013 Allocation Committee reviewed a range of variables that might reflect the need for Sea Grant programming in a given area. They looked for values that were consistently collected, didn't require manipulation by the NSGO, and were recognized as broadly reliable. These included such factors as number of marine scientists (using data from NSF), number of working ports and harbors, size of the maritime economy, number of active fishing vessels, size of watersheds, number of coastal tourists, and more. Many of these were proposed by one or more Sea Grant programs as being potentially relevant.

Many of the variables proposed had issues in data collection methodology, narrow scope, or other challenges that made them tricky to apply to all programs or to Sea Grant's whole mission. Additionally, each variable proposed had a high degree of correlation (>80%) with either coastal shoreline or more often, coastal population. Based on this, the committee proposed using those two variables, with shoreline receiving a weight of 10% (much more than that, and virtually all funds went to Alaska)

and coastal population receiving a weight of 90%. This was followed by an iterative process that ensured:

- no program lost funds, even if their calculated need was lower than their current allocation,
- no state exceeded the 15% statutory limit,³ and
- all programs reached at least the minimum base funding level.

For FY 2024 and beyond, the coastal population and shoreline data were updated based on the best available information. These data will be updated with the most current available data when a new allocation calculation is made.

The sources for 2014-2023 coastal population and shoreline data are:

- 1) [NOAA's State of the Coast National Coastal Population Report, Population Trends from 1970 to 2020](#)
- 2) [United State Census Coastline County Population](#)

³ Per Sea Grant Act, it is 15% for a state: "(3) *The total amount which may be obligated for payment pursuant to grants made to, and contracts entered into with, persons under this section within any one State in any fiscal year shall not exceed an amount equal to 15 percent of the total funds appropriated for such year pursuant to section 212.*"

Appendix D - FY 2024 Base Funding for Sea Grant Programs

Note: Base funding includes program directed Coastal Resilience funds.

Sea Grant Program	Base Funding
AK	\$1,767,537
CA	\$4,342,092
CT	\$1,336,419
DE	\$1,483,000
FL	\$2,609,924
GA	\$1,347,563
Guam	\$1,325,000
HI	\$2,528,179
IL/IN	\$1,514,660
LA	\$1,652,424
Lake Champlain	\$1,325,000
Law Center	\$ 700,000
MD	\$1,670,801
ME	\$1,331,613
MI	\$1,663,859
MIT	\$2,424,973
MN	\$1,326,204
MS/AL	\$1,447,000
NC	\$1,857,356
NH	\$1,327,163
NJ	\$1,584,358
NY	\$2,918,338
OH	\$1,398,839
OR	\$2,636,234
PA	\$1,336,803
PR	\$1,337,992
RI	\$2,376,650
SC	\$1,476,073
TX	\$2,183,204
USC	\$1,363,611
VA	\$1,747,583
WA	\$2,969,987
WHOI	\$1,335,942
WI	\$2,215,778
Total	\$61,592,159