

2024-2027

Sea Grant Omnibus Application Requirements



NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM

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Summary

The National Sea Grant College Program was established by the U.S. Congress in 1966 (amended in 2008, Public Law 110-394) to be a highly leveraged federal and state partnership to harness the intellectual capacity of the nation's universities and research institutions to solve problems and generate opportunities in coastal communities.

Subject to the availability of funding, the purpose of this document is to advise eligible applicants developing omnibus applications for Sea Grant programs. Pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 1123(d)(3)(B), the amount of federal funds allocated to each Sea Grant program is set by the director of the National Sea Grant College Program. Non-federal matching funds must equal at least 50% of the federal request, as detailed in Section III.B below.

Award Period

The anticipated start date is February 1, 2024, with projects to be completed by January 31, 2028. Individual projects in the omnibus application may run the entire duration of the grant or any shorter interval.

Submission Date

Applications must be submitted to grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, October 12, 2023. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. Eastern.)

01. Program Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA provides funding to Sea Grant institutions to increase the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, and conservation of the nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. These important efforts promote a strong educational base, responsive research and training activities, broad and prompt dissemination of knowledge and techniques, and multidisciplinary approaches to environmental problems, in accordance with 33 U.S.C. § 1121(b).

B. Program Priorities

Proposals should serve as the implementation plan of approved individual Sea Grant program strategic plans.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966, as amended (33 U.S.C. § 1121 et seq.).

02. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to the availability of funding, this announcement describes the application requirements for eligible applicants to apply for institutional funding for FY 2024 through FY 2027, referred to as each Sea Grant program's omnibus application. Pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 1123(d)(3)(B), the amount of federal funds allocated to each Sea Grant program is set by the director of the National Sea Grant College Program. The federal funding amount to plan for will be communicated to eligible applicants in a separate document.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards, or that any application will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is February 1, 2024, with projects to be completed by January 31, 2028. Individual projects in the omnibus application may run the entire duration of the grant or any shorter interval. No projects proposed in the omnibus application can start before the proposed start date of the omnibus or end after the proposed end date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument is a cooperative agreement to an eligible institution. A cooperative agreement is used when substantial involvement of the federal government during performance of the proposed work is anticipated. The recipient can expect substantial collaboration, participation, and/or intervention in the management of the project by NOAA. Some examples of substantial involvement by NOAA include, but are not limited to, required NOAA approval before certain projects can be initiated in grant out-years, the ability of NOAA to halt an activity immediately if detailed performance specifications are not met; NOAA specifying direction or redirection of scope of work due to the interrelationships with other projects; and NOAA involvement in mid-cycle programmatic evaluation and planning processes.

Program directors will receive funding level guidance from the director of the National Sea Grant College Program. If you have specific questions related to your funding, please ask your federal program officer. For example, some Sea Grant programs receive additional funds either through Sea Grant or other parts of NOAA and/or the federal government. These funds should not be included in your omnibus application unless your federal program officer directs you to include them.

03. Eligibility Information

Match may be in the form of selected "in kind" services, unrecovered indirect (see below), or additional funds from a specified institution, agency, industry, or non federal program. No funds from federal entities can be used as match, unless specified in their respective statutes. Funds are still considered as federal for purposes of matching even when initially given to a state or local agency. According to 2 C.F.R. 200.1, "in kind" contributions mean the value of non cash contributions (i.e., property and services) that benefit a federally assisted project or program; and are contributed by non Federal third parties, without charge, to a non federal entity under a federal award.

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to submit omnibus applications: Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs. For the remainder of this document, these entities are collectively referred to as "Sea Grant programs."

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by recruiting, retaining, and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. We encourage Sea Grant program applications to reflect diverse participation with regards to age, race, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Non-federal matching funds equal to at least fifty percent (50%) of the federal funding request (i.e., one dollar of match for every two dollars of federal money received) must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted. The cumulative match at the end of each year of the grant should not fall below 50 percent of the cumulative federal request up to that point. In-kind contributions directly supporting the application may count towards this matching requirement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

04. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages will be made available within appropriate time prior to the due date. An email will be sent to all Sea Grant programs with the opportunity number and instructions for downloading the application package at a later date.

B. Content of the Application

IMPORTANT NOTE: This proposal package will be using a different set of forms than Sea Grant programs have completed in the past. Instead of the "SF424 NOAA Standard Non-Construction Application Package" of forms, this omnibus application will include the "SF424 NOAA Research & Related (R&R) Forms Package." **While many of the forms may be familiar, please pay special attention to the headings and instructions in this section.** Additional form-specific guidance will be provided at a later date.

The Sea Grant omnibus application comprises an integrated suite of individual research, extension, education, communication, and management projects that together address the strategic goals of the program, as well as a series of required grant management forms to support the proposal. This section provides an overview of these required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below and are responsible for ensuring all required elements are included. 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.

Required Elements

(Please also see [Section 8. Other Information](#) for additional post-application required elements for submission):

1. Project Abstract Summary Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0019)

Using 4,000 characters or less, the Project Abstract should provide an overview of the entire omnibus application. Ensure the Project Abstract succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. It should be a self-contained description of the omnibus as one, inclusive project and should contain a general statement of objectives and methods to be employed. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a technically literate lay reader. Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive or proprietary/confidential information. This project abstract information (as submitted) will be made available on public websites and/or databases including USAspending.gov.

Required Elements for Project Abstract:

- Use the following format:
 - **Purpose:**
 - **Activities to be performed:**
 - **Expected Outcomes:**
 - **Intended Beneficiaries:**
 - **Subrecipient Activities:**
- **Keep it short.** In most cases, each element above should be a couple of sentences to a paragraph in length.
- **DO NOT repeat the Proposal Title.** The Proposal Title is always presented with the Project Description, so including it in the abstract is not necessary.
- Include a high quality description that includes specificity regarding the purpose of the project. Characteristics of strong abstracts include a plain language description of the purpose for the project (which may include specific performance goals, indicators, milestones, or expected outcomes of the project), activities to be performed, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiary or recipient.
- **Keep it simple.** DO NOT use abbreviations, acronyms, technical terminology, or agency-specific terms. The intended audience is Congress and the general public, not specific interested parties and/or federal employees. The education level of the reader should be assumed to be the fifth grade of elementary school. Even those who are highly educated will appreciate a simply written document when they have hundreds of projects to review in one sitting.



2. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)

This form must be completed and include a profile for the Sea Grant program director, the associate and/or assistant director(s), plus at least one senior staff member most relevant to each functional area (not the Director). CVs and Current and Pending Support for each person's profile will also be attached to this form. This form does not need to be completed for research PIs, unless the program/university wishes to include them here. However, research PIs will have to include CVs for individual research project narratives in the next section.

3. Project Narrative Attachment

Table of Contents

Each program must include a **Table of Contents** at the beginning of their project narrative attachment. The Table of Contents should include the project ID and the title of the project in the order in which they follow in the remainder of the document. It is highly recommended that the table of contents includes clickable links to each project's cover page.

Omnibus-Level Information

Programs may include an introductory section at the beginning of their Project Narrative Attachment that provides an overview of the program and an introduction to the omnibus application. Additionally, programs should include an omnibus-level diversity statement. The NSGO recognizes that there is 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 and beyond the agency. In the omnibus-level diversity statement, please, describe how well the proposed activities within the application broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, geography, etc.) and how these groups are given a voice in the community of practice. Examples could include (but are not limited to) the full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in conducting this work or benefitting from its outcomes.

Project IDs

Each individual project included in the application must be assigned a project ID that identifies the type of project as noted below. For projects that integrate elements of multiple types of projects, applicants should choose the project ID that best describes the effort.

- **Management/Administration Projects** - Support and activities for Sea Grant program leadership and other administrative or management staff. The management and program administration project should contain the project summary, budget, and new or revised material not covered in the program's strategic plan - such as the program organization chart, management team information, management objectives, advisory and oversight structure, oversight and reporting mechanisms, and a short resume/CV for the director (PI). If the program has completed an overall data management plan for the entire omnibus, it should also be included here.
 - Management and administration projects must be given a project ID number that begins with "M/".
- **Program Development Projects** - Program development (PD) is intended to fund rapid response projects that could not have been anticipated at the time the omnibus was written or to make investments in seed projects or other small projects. The application may contain a single program development project whose budget in any year may not exceed 10% of the total omnibus federal funding in that year.
 - Since the PD project is a management/administrative resource for achieving the objectives of the omnibus, it must be given a project ID number that begins with "M/".
- **Research Projects** - Research projects are usually selected through open competition in accordance with the [National Sea Grant College Program's National Competition Policy](#).
 - Research projects, whether selected competitively or without competition via a merit review process, should be given a project number beginning with "R/".

- **Communication, Extension, and Education Projects** - Sea Grant communications, extension, and education projects may be from one to four years in duration, and together should describe the totality of a program's communication, extension, and education efforts over the performance period. Short resumes/CVs for other program key personnel (i.e., research coordinator, extension lead, education lead, communications lead, etc.) should be included with their associated project descriptions, if not already included in the "[Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form](#)."
 - **Extension Projects** - Projects that provide research-based information, tools, and technical assistance to industries, practitioners, decision-makers, and/or communities in a professional setting to translate science into actionable information, including workforce development trainings, collaborative processes, industry and community relationship-building, gap analyses, and other engagement activities.
 - Extension projects should be given a project number beginning with "A/" (for advisory services).
 - **Education Projects:** Projects/activities that exist to enhance the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities of P-12 and community (non-professional) audiences; this may include community science efforts if education, rather than research, is the primary function. It also includes formalized undergraduate, graduate, and professional education or workforce development activities, including but not limited to assistantships, internships, scholarships, fellowships, and certification programs, whose focus is on the education of participants, rather than some other primary goal, such as supporting research or expanding program staff capacity.
 - Education projects should be given a project ID beginning with "E/".
 - **Communication Projects:** Activities related to informing a wide variety of Sea Grant audiences, such as websites, videos, photography, audio products, graphics, written stories and reports, and other related products and efforts. Communications project(s) should describe how your program will manage publications, photographs, and other media using published guidance and best practices, as applicable, and how communications products will achieve compliance with the appropriate sections of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Communication projects should be given a project ID beginning with "C/".
- **Future Competed Projects** - This project ID is used for competitive projects not yet identified, such as those that will be selected from future research competitions in Years 3-4. In this round of funding, there may be one or more "Future Competed Projects" in the omnibus application. To the extent possible, each known competition should be given its own, separate future competed project ID that begins with "P/" (for placeholder).
 - These are the only projects that should be given a "P/" project ID.

Individual Project Information

It is anticipated that each omnibus application will contain two categories of projects - those written by the Sea Grant program, and those competitively selected through each program's request for proposals (RFPs). Initial omnibus applications may only include projects to be funded using Sea Grant funding. All other projects (i.e. passthroughs) must be submitted separately to be added as amendments to the original application.



Sea Grant Project Proposals

Each project proposal narrative written by a Sea Grant program should be written such that they are able to stand on their own if an outside person were to ask what Sea Grant does, hopes to accomplish, and how Sea Grant programs are managed and staffed. The project proposal narrative should be a primarily forward-looking document that concentrates on a Sea Grant program's plans and outcomes for the next four years in alignment with its strategic plan. A program's omnibus application will have multiple projects within the project narrative. Please pay attention to project titles and attempt to use clear, concise, and informative titles as these may be shared with agency leadership or Congress. Do not use acronyms or shorthand language. Consult your federal program officer with any questions you may have on how to best capture your program's work.

Competitively-Selected Projects

All competitively-selected projects must follow the policies and procedures described in the [National Sea Grant College Program's National Competition Policy](#). As stated in the policy, at the completion of the competitive process, the letter of intent and associated materials must be emailed directly to the federal program officer to request concurrence and demonstrate adherence to the competitive policy. The final letter of intent and letter of concurrence from the federal program officer should NOT be included in the omnibus application but rather submitted via email.

Following the table of contents, each individual project included within the omnibus application must include the following components (a through d), with differences between Sea Grant and Competitively-Selected projects noted.



Sea Grant Project Proposals must include the following components (a through d) and must adhere to the following order and format.

Competitively-Selected Projects must include the following components (a through d in order listed below), and are encouraged to follow the order and format of the Project Proposal Narrative below. The NSGO understands that competitive projects developed by PIs during the RFP stage may not always adhere to the order, format, and page limits listed below. Programs may choose to adjust the page-limit to best serve the intent of their RFPs. However, to the extent possible, programs should attempt to align RFP requirements for those projects to the criteria outlined below and adhere to the following limits to allow for streamlined review.

a) Project Cover Page

Each individual project within the Project Narrative Attachment should start with a cover page listing the designated project ID, the project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of the PI and any co-PIs. Programs should not include budget numbers on the cover page.


b) Project Proposal Narrative

The project proposal narrative should include the following components using the format described. 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 to satisfactorily describe each of the project sections below.. Any works cited, CVs, letters of support, and current and pending support sections included do not contribute to the suggested page limit.

Continued...Project Proposal Narrative

- Project abstract (not included in the page count)
- Project background
 - Explain the specific opportunities and challenges this project seeks to address and justify its importance.
- Project objectives
 - Provide a list of clearly defined objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of the program.
- Project details
 - Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives. Explicitly explain how this project will be conducted.
- Anticipated outcomes and results
 - What are the expected outcomes and results related to the creation of scientific knowledge?
 - Provide a list of expected outcomes and deliverables that will result from your project(s). Explain how these outcomes will be directly and beneficially applied to the current and future needs of communities and local interested parties.
- Project timeline
 - Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work covering the entire project duration. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and release of results.
- Institutional Review Board (as applicable, not included in page limit)
 - Projects intending to use human test subjects for research purposes should be identified and include an anticipated timeline for when Institutional Review Board approval will be obtained and when the activities involving human test subjects are expected to occur. If the approval documentation is not available at the time of Omnibus submission, a special award condition will be placed on the award. The program will submit an award action request to satisfy that special award condition once approval has been obtained. No work involving human subjects may be undertaken, conducted, or costs incurred and/or charged for human subjects research, until the appropriate documentation is approved in writing by the NOAA grants officer.
- Outreach and technology transfer plan (as applicable, not included in page limit)
 - Provide a cohesive strategy to ensure that users across the greater geographic region, beyond those who actively participate in the proposed work, will learn about the project's outcomes.
- Curriculum vitae (CV) for each PI (if not already included in the "[Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form](#)"; suggested two pages per CV; not included in page limit)
- Works cited (if applicable; not included in page limit)
- Letters of support (if applicable; not included in page limit)
- Current and pending support (if applicable and if not already included in the "[Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form](#)"; not included in page limit)

c) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review - Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538) or NEPA statement



Separate Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaires must be thoroughly filled out for all relevant actions in the omnibus, unless covered under an exception for the omnibus listed below. Every project should have one or more questionnaires filled out or include the NEPA statement noted below under Exceptions.

If an individual project in the omnibus application includes multiple sub-projects or actions (e.g., a competition, extension or education sub-projects), then a questionnaire must be completed for each sub-project or action—unless there are similar actions that can be appropriately grouped, described, and reviewed within one questionnaire. Sea Grant programs can work with their federal program officer to determine what constitutes a discrete action requiring a stand alone questionnaire.

Copies of all permits required for project activities must be provided if they are final. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information. Submit NEPA packages (questionnaires, permits, etc.) via email to the federal program officer as soon as they are available before the Omnibus submission, in order to allow for sufficient time to complete NEPA review. In addition, these materials must also be included in your Omnibus application.

If sufficient detail is not provided, the federal program officer may request additional information or place a special award condition on the omnibus award prohibiting specific activities until the information is provided (e.g., if permits or other environmental compliance documentation is not currently available). Some relevant extension and education projects may not have complete details determined at the time the omnibus is submitted (e.g., exact site location for activities). Please provide details in the questionnaire that cover the possible parameters of the project (e.g., a list of the possible sites based on previous work) so the federal program officer can assess whether the activity, under all likely circumstances, will meet environmental compliance.

The Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, guidance on how to complete the questionnaire, as well as examples of completed questionnaires, webinars, and Q&As can be found here under NEPA Compliance:

<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrants/Implementation>.

Exceptions to NEPA

Projects or actions that fall into the below categories do not need a questionnaire. If a program believes a project in the omnibus application meets one of the exceptions, the program should include the following statement directly after the relevant project narrative,

"This project's activities are exclusively comprised of [choose applicable activities from bulleted list below] and therefore no NOAA environmental compliance questionnaire is being submitted, as allowed by NSGO guidance."

NOAA has final responsibility to determine whether a project or action requires environmental compliance review. If NOAA determines that a project or action needs an environmental review, staff may request the abbreviated questionnaire.

- Program management (i.e., projects assigned the "M/" project ID)
 - Program Development projects (these projects may need to undergo environmental compliance review when the program identifies project activities; please work with your federal program officer during implementation of these projects).
- Placeholder projects (e.g., "Future Competed Projects;" these projects will have a special award condition on the grant and will undergo environmental compliance review when the program submits an award action request to satisfy that special award condition)
- Workshops or conferences that do not involve the below list of actions requiring a questionnaire
- Communication activities that do not involve the below list of actions
- Fellowships where the Sea Grant program does not have discretion over the fellow's externally funded research
- Hiring actions
- Purely administrative actions (e.g., purchase of office supplies)

Additional categories for which a questionnaire must be completed:



- Research--all research projects (those whose project ID starts with "R/") and all other projects that include a component of research (including full lab-based or social science research)
- Environmental permits, authorizations, or waivers
- Biological take and/or release (including tagging)
- Environmental sampling
- Hazardous or toxic substances and waste
- Permanent or temporary environmental effects
- Endangered or threatened species and/or protected areas
- Known or unknown risks to human health or the environment
- Controversial environmental subject matter

d) Data Management Plan

A [NOAA Data Sharing Directive](#), effective January 1, 2013, requires all grant and cooperative agreement recipients to make environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users. This shall be done at no or low cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or by security requirements. An additional [Data Sharing Plan FAQ](#) is also available for reference.

All omnibus applications must include a data management plan. The data management plan should be a written narrative that briefly describes the parameters for projects in the omnibus that produce environmental data. This requirement also applies to any data developed as part of sub-awards.

A typical plan should include:

- Descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be collected or created during the course of the project;
- The tentative date by which data will be shared;
- The standards to be used for data/metadata format and content;
- Procedures for providing access, data, and security;
- The approximate total volume of data to be collected;
- The type of collection method (e.g., aircraft, ship, satellite);
- Your program's policies addressing data stewardship and preservation;
- Your program's prior experience with publishing such data; and
- A point of contact for questions about the data covered by the plan.

Applicants can satisfy this requirement in one of two ways:

1. Applicants may choose to provide an individual data management plan for each project in the omnibus application that generates data, or
2. Applicants may choose to submit a single data management plan covering all non-research (R/) projects within the omnibus that will not generate environmental data. In that scenario, a program may choose to include a statement covering all of those projects stating, "These projects will not generate any environmental data."

e) **Do not include** the following for each project:

Omnibus applications **should not include** competitive external peer review documents, letters of intent, and letter of concurrence documents. These documents are to be emailed directly to your federal program officer.

4. Research and Related Budget

a) Research and Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Form (OMB Control No. 4040-0001)

The Research and Related Budget is a single form that will need to be filled out covering the entire, overall omnibus award by budget period following the instructions from Grants.gov.

b) Budget Justification Attachment

At the end of the Research and Related Budget form (see 4.a above), "Section L" provides space for one attachment titled, "Budget Justification." This attachment will follow the order and format used in previous omnibus submissions.

Each individual project within the omnibus application must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and a budget narrative) **in the following order and format**. See subsections below for details on how to prepare these documents. *If possible, a PDF bookmarked by project ID would be greatly appreciated.*



To allow for streamlined review, please place documents in the following order in your budget justification attachment:

- A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form describing the yearly and total budgets of the **overall omnibus** (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Years 1-4).
- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 forms describing the yearly and total budget for **Project One** (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Years 1-4).
- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 forms for the yearly and total budget of any sub-awards associated within **Project 1** of the omnibus (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Years 1-4) - if applicable.
- Budget justification narrative for **Project 1**
- Continue order and format for each individual project in the omnibus package

i) Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)

A required form used to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the overall omnibus and each project in this application. Please download the most up-to-date [Excel version of the 90-4 form](#) when preparing the omnibus applications. The Excel version should be used in the creation of the 90-4 and should then be turned into a PDF to include with the budget narrative package. Ensure that each Sea Grant 90-4 form is properly filled out with the project ID number, and start and end dates. When printing the Excel form to PDF, please ensure the full sheet is captured and no information is cut-off. The following are required in the omnibus application package:

- A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form describing the yearly and total budgets of the **overall omnibus** (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Years 1-4).
- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 forms describing the yearly and total budget of **each project** in the omnibus (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Years 1-4).
- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 forms for the yearly and total budget of any sub-awards associated with each project in the omnibus (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Years 1-4).

ii) Budget Narrative

A budget narrative for each year of each project in the omnibus that explains budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Budget narrative guidance provided by NOAA Grants Management Division can be found at [NOAA Grants Management Division's Budget Narrative Guidance](#).

It is very important that the total federal and non-federal matching fund amounts from the Sea Grant 90-4 forms equal the total application federal and non-federal match amounts on the SF- 424 and Research and Related Budget form. Failure to do so may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the grant preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered. Detailed guidance on filling out the standard federal forms and assurances can be found in Section IV.B.3

5. Additional Omnibus Application Package Forms

In addition to the forms required above, standard federal forms and assurances are required for the overall omnibus and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov or on the [Sea Grant website](#). These include:

a) SF-424 R&R Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)

This form, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," must identify the entire funding period (February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2028), 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. **Total federal and non-federal amounts listed in the SF-424 R&R, the Cumulative Budget of the Research and Related Budget form, and overall Sea Grant 90-4 form must be the same.**

b) SF-424B Assurances (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007)

The form, titled "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

c) CD-511 (Grants.gov, US DOC)

The form, titled "Certification Regarding Lobbying," must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

d) SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046) - optional form, include if appropriate

This form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," is an optional form and should be included if appropriate. If included, it must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

C. Unique entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted to grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, October 12, 2023. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. Eastern.) Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the National Sea Grant College Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

F. Funding Restrictions

The Sea Grant Act at 33 U.S.C. § 1124(d)(2) states:

"No payment under any grant or contract under this section may be applied to:

(A) the purchase or rental of any land; or

(B) the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel; except that payment under any such grant or contract may be applied to the short-term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings which are in direct support of any Sea Grant program or project and may, if approved by the Secretary, be applied to the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures, or to the rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of activities under any Sea Grant program or project."



Only projects that will be funded using Sea Grant appropriated dollars may be included with a program's initial omnibus submission.

05. Application Review Information

Federal program officers will review the complete omnibus application package using the following criteria.

A. Evaluation Criteria

- (1) Is the application complete and correct per the required elements listed in IV.B. "Content of the Application"?
- (2) Is the scope of work feasible and does it align with the program's strategic plan and advance the programs' strategic goals?
- (3) Are all projects described sufficiently to allow accountability? Project proposals must include clear objectives and anticipated outcomes.
- (4) Have all projects been adequately reviewed?
 - Are the described competitive projects consistent with the recommendations determined at the completion of the competitive review process as documented by the letter of intent?
- (5) Are all project budgets adequately justified, and reasonable for the work being proposed?
- (6) Do all projects have sufficient environmental compliance documentation to complete environmental review (i.e., completed Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire and copies of all federal and state permits or statement that no such questionnaire is required)?
- (7) Are all environmental data to be generated covered by a data management plan?
- (8) Has the applicant provided sufficiently detailed and consistent information for all required application elements?

B. Review and Selection Process

All project proposals will be reviewed against the above evaluation criteria by the National Sea Grant Office federal program officer and a NOAA Grants Management Division grants specialist. The letter of intent, provided separately via email, will also aid the federal program officer in review of the application.

The project proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will be reviewed by the federal program officer to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions.

The federal program officer, NEPA team, or grants specialist may contact the program to discuss questions about the environmental effects, merit, or administrative correctness of the omnibus application, and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the grant preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered and environmental review is complete.

C. Selection Factors

Subject to the availability of funds and the discretion of the director of the National Sea Grant College Program, all applications are expected to be funded as institutional cooperative agreement awards based on eligibility, compliance with requirements set forth in this announcement, and satisfactory resolution of any questions from the National Sea Grant Office and NOAA Grants Management Division.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to start February 1, 2024. The public announcement of the awards will be coordinated by the National Sea Grant Office after all application packages have been recommended for funding.

06. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award (CD-450) is executed by the NOAA Grants Management Division grants officer and is the authorizing award document. It is provided electronically via the granting system to the authorized representative of the recipient organization. The authorized representative for a successful applicant will accept the award via the granting system.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(1) Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements For Grants And Cooperative Agreements - The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

(2) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements - Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

(3) Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions found in the notice of award CD-450.

(4) Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements continued

((5) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA Federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website:

<http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA,

http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

(6) Review of Risk - After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements continued

(7) Data Sharing Plan - 1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. 2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a data management plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The data management plan should be aligned with the data management guidance provided by NOAA in the announcement. The contents of the data management plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. 3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the data management plan from funded proposals, or use information from the data management plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

(8) Indirect Cost Rate - If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the MTDC base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements continued

(9) Minority Serving Institutions - The Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

(10) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the Application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

(11) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA-Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at:

<https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Mar/1330-52.222-70%20NOAA%20Sexual%20Assault%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment%20Prevention%20and%20Response%20Policy%20%28except%20for%20services%20for%20the%20use%20of%20a%20vesse%20l%29%20%281%29.pdf>.

C. Reporting

All progress reports for omnibus grants must be submitted electronically using the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) format through the granting platform. Additionally, Sea Grant programs are required to report annually through the NOAA Sea Grant's Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation Resources (PIER) system.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (31 U.S.C. § 6101 note) includes a requirement for recipients of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards. All recipients of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsr.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 C.F.R. pt. 170.

07. Agency Contacts

Requests for information regarding this request for proposals should be directed to the assigned federal program officer for your program. Federal program officer assignments and contact information can be found here: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About/National-Office>

08. Other Information

(1) Programs must submit documentation by either including a statement within the omnibus application, or via email to their federal program officer, that they have responded to the new requirement to provide the following information for all named collaborators on your proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035).

Note: Programs may use their own method of collecting this information. The NSGO has also developed this [online form](#) as an optional method for collection. Submission to this form would count as fulfillment of this requirement.

1. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? List all that apply.
 - a. Black
 - b. Latino
 - c. Indigenous and/or Native American
 - d. Asian American
 - e. Pacific Islander
 - f. Other person of color
 - g. Members of religious minorities
 - h. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) persons
 - i. Persons with disabilities
 - j. Persons who live in rural areas
 - k. Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
 - l. No, I do not identify with any of these groups

(2) Programs are required to use the National Sea Grant College Program's [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.

(3) To enable the requirements in Section VIII.1 above, for each Project (as described in the Project and Budget Narratives, as well as in Section VIII.2), programs will **need to submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form for each project within the omnibus application by Friday, January 19, 2024**. A [detailed step-by-step guide](#) and [individual worksheets](#) for completing the 90-2 Form are available on the [Inside Sea Grant - Implementation page](#). The information provided in the Sea Grant 90-2 Form will be publicly available and searchable on the National Sea Grant College Program public [website](#) once the project is approved and funded. See FAQs for 2021 PIER-Related Business Rule Updates on [Inside Sea Grant](#) for more information, as well as the documents noted in (4) below.

(4) Programs are required, to the best of their ability, to describe their omnibus extension and education activities more granularly by characterizing them as discrete projects within PIER. This action would be similar to how research projects have long been characterized as discrete projects within PIER. **However, within a program's 2024-2027 omnibus application, extension and education programming may still be reflected in an aggregated fashion.** See Resolving Omnibus Extension and Education Records on [Inside Sea Grant](#) for more information, along with the revised PIER Project Classifications.

(5) The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary, or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the omnibus application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt.

(6) The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed, and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other federal employees, and also by federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

(7) In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. § pt 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this funding opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 C.F.R. § pt 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.