

# DECEMBER 2020 – REQUEST FOR PREPROPOSALS

## Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program Two-Year Research Grants

The Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program (IISG) anticipates having \$800,000 to invest in promising research projects relevant to southern Lake Michigan and surrounding coastal communities in northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana. Work is to be completed in the 2022-23 biennium. Work can be conducted outside of the geographic area outlined above provided applicants make a compelling case for why their work is relevant to southern Lake Michigan and surrounding coastal communities. Funding is competitively awarded following procedures outlined at <https://iiseagrant.org/research/funding-opportunities/proposal-selection-process/>.

**For the 2022-23 cycle, IISG will prioritize the funding of projects whose outcomes demonstrate potential to benefit underserved\* communities in the southern Lake Michigan region.**

**Project Details:** Projects should propose to answer a clear research question or set of related questions, and should demonstrate fit with the IISG strategic plan: <https://iiseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IISG-StrategicPlan-2018-2023.pdf>. Four areas are of special interest for the 2022-23 funding cycle:

- Production, marketing, and/or distribution of local foods with a focus on fisheries and aquaculture<sup>1,2</sup>
- Adapting to changing lake levels in the southern Lake Michigan region<sup>3</sup>
- Water safety, with a goal of reducing the number of drownings in Lake Michigan<sup>2</sup>
- Improving Great Lakes education initiatives, including how to best raise awareness of how to safely recreate near or in Lake Michigan<sup>2,4</sup>

Additional topic areas of interest include broader aquaculture research, aquatic invasive species, community climate readiness, fisheries, healthy waters and pollution prevention, recreation and tourism, stormwater and green infrastructure, sustainable community planning, and water supply. All research projects should fit at least one of these topic areas. While IISG will prioritize funding projects that address the areas of special interest, projects in any of the above topic areas are eligible for funding.

**Types of Research:** IISG anticipates funding projects that use a variety of experimental techniques, including but not limited to social science assessments (e.g., of attitudes or perceptions related to behavior change), economic cost-benefit analyses, field or laboratory studies, and modeling efforts. Prospective principal investigators (PIs) can find examples of previously funded research projects at <https://iiseagrant.org/research/research-projects/>.

Research funded by IISG serves as a strong basis for education, outreach, or extension programs; thus, applicants are strongly encouraged to identify clear end users or otherwise demonstrate connections to stakeholder groups who will benefit from their research. PIs may be able to discuss their project ideas with IISG extension and education staff members to review the

potential for proposed research to have maximal societal impact and/or identify potential stakeholder groups.

**Funding Amounts:** Projects can request up to \$100,000 per year for 2 years (maximum \$200,000 total). IISG anticipates funding 4–5 projects via this call.

All applicants must demonstrate at least 50% in non-federal match (1 non-federal dollar for every 2 federal dollars requested) for the overall project. Match can be slightly higher than 50% in year 1 and lower in subsequent years so long as the project is matched at least 50% overall (i.e., if the PI requests \$90,000 in year 1, they must provide at least \$45,000 in match for a total of \$135,000 put toward the project in year 1). Examples of what can be used as match include academic year salary and volunteer time, but specifics of what can be claimed varies by institution. **PIs should work closely with the fiscal or business office at their home institution to determine what is allowable as match.** Funding will be provided for up to 2 years beginning February 1, 2022, or the date of the award, and projects should be completed by January 31, 2024.

**PI Eligibility:** Investigators from educational or research institutions including universities, museums, and other NGOs, are eligible to serve as PI for these funds. Priority will be given to Illinois- and Indiana-based researchers. Researchers from other states are welcome to apply but proposed work must demonstrate how it will benefit the mission of IISG as described above. IISG staff members are not eligible for funding and should not be listed as co-investigators. Consulting companies can serve as co-investigators or project partners but should not receive more than 50% of the project funds.

IISG encourages submissions by early career scientists and/or persons who have partnered with, or plan to mentor, early career scientists. IISG also encourages all applicants to make research plans such that their work will effectively center on underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and/or people from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds that have limited their ability to pursue a career in STEM. This could include recruitment of students or personnel from these underrepresented groups.

**Preproposal Submission Process:** Prospective PIs must submit a preproposal to be considered for funding. Each preproposal should be saved as a single PDF document and contain the following:

1. Cover page. List: Project Title, Principal Investigator and Affiliation, Associate Investigator(s) and Affiliation(s) (if applicable), Topic Area(s) for your project, and Preliminary Budget Request.
2. 2-page project summary. Single-spaced pages with no smaller than 11-point font. Outline the Objectives, Methodology, and Rationale for your proposed project. Identify stakeholder groups that could apply outputs from the proposed work, the expected impact(s) that may be achieved, and how project partners will engage these users in applying results.

3. 1-page preliminary budget. Provide a brief breakdown of anticipated costs. Include overhead as required by your institution. Preproposals do not need a fully executed budget. Match does not need to be detailed in the preproposal budget, however, upon submission of a full proposal, PIs will need to demonstrate a 1:2 non-federal to federal dollar match.
4. 2-page CVs for PI and main project partners. PIs from educational or research institutions are eligible for these funds. Subcontracts to associate investigator institutions are possible.

Preproposals will be reviewed by external-to-IISG (but potentially still in Illinois or Indiana) subject experts for the following, graded on a 1-to-5 point scale (5 being best):

- Does the work fit within the scope of the thematic areas of the RFP?
- Is the work scientifically significant?
- Will the work fill important knowledge and data gaps?
- Will anticipated results lead to positive societal impacts?

Subject expert reviewers will be required to declare any conflicts of interest. After subject experts have returned their reviews, the IISG leadership team (which includes the director, assistant director, and outreach program leader) plus the IISG research coordinator and any relevant IISG specialists (e.g., education specialists for education projects; pollution prevention specialists for contaminant-related projects) will review preproposals and provide additional written feedback to applicants. The goal of this feedback will be to improve relevancy or fit with the IISG strategic plan and program goals.

Any applicant who submits a preproposal on time is eligible to submit a full proposal. Applicants will receive an email encouraging or not encouraging full proposal submission. Decisions to encourage or not encourage a full proposal are made based on external subject expert review scores.

IISG recognizes that development of full proposal applications can be a significant time investment on the part of the prospective PI. Decisions to encourage or not encourage are based on expected funding levels, and are designed to minimize extra work for potential applicants. Typically, IISG encourages preproposals such that we will ultimately have a 1-in-3 or 1-in-4 success rate at the full proposal stage (i.e., if IISG expects to fund three projects, we encourage up to 12 full proposals). Preproposals that are not encouraged typically have a low probability of success at the full proposal stage. Comments from the screening process will be sent to all applicants who submitted a preproposal.

**Preproposal Submission Deadline:** Preproposals should be submitted by 5 p.m. CST (6 p.m. EST) February 1, 2021 to [iisgres@purdue.edu](mailto:iisgres@purdue.edu). Please indicate “2022 Biennial Grant Preproposal” in the subject line.

**Full Proposal Submission Process:** Regardless of whether or not an applicant was encouraged to submit a full proposal, prospective PIs are strongly recommended to consider and address any

comments as they craft their full proposal application. Full instructions for full proposal submission will be provided along with preproposal feedback.

Funding recommendations are based on external review, but are ultimately made at the discretion of the director of Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant. Provided that enough proposals are of sufficient quality and scientific rigor, priority will be given to projects that will conduct work that will benefit underserved communities and/or recruit underrepresented minorities, as described above, and projects that address one or more areas of special interest. Following this, if there remain enough proposals of sufficient quality and scientific rigor, IISG will also prioritize funding research at different institutions, with a preference for Illinois- or Indiana-based PIs and spreading funds across states as possible.

**Proposal Review Timeline:**

February 1, 2021	Preproposals due in program office (with preliminary budgets)
Mid-March, 2021	Encouragement to submit full proposals
May 17, 2021	Full proposals due in program office
September 15, 2021	Notification of funding, accompanied by panel and peer reviews
October 8, 2021	Final adjusted proposals due in program office
February 1, 2022	Project initiation (subject to the availability of funds)

**Questions** regarding eligibility or submission requirements may be directed to Carolyn Foley at [cfoley@purdue.edu](mailto:cfoley@purdue.edu) or by phone at 765-494-3601.

\*Underserved communities may be underserved because of geographic location, racial and ethnic status, and/or other special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status or age).

<sup>1</sup>When considering aquaculture-related research questions, prospective PIs are strongly encouraged to explore barriers identified [here](#). Though this report is specific to walleye, the questions identified by workshop participants can likely be applied to other species.

<sup>2</sup>These topics have been identified as regional priorities by the Great Lakes Sea Grant programs. If an applicant submits a project proposal in one of these areas, there may be opportunities to partner with researchers from other Great Lakes Sea Grant Network programs (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Lake Champlain).

<sup>3</sup>When considering lake-level-related research questions, prospective PIs are strongly encouraged to explore gaps and needs identified [here](#). IISG is particularly interested in supporting research focused on minimizing shoreline flooding or erosion effects in lower income areas, understanding costs and benefits of particular mitigation strategies, and/or identifying the best ways to overcome barriers to implementation of strategies to minimize negative effects of lake level change.

<sup>4</sup>When considering Great Lakes Literacy and Education research questions, prospective PIs are strongly encouraged to review current efforts underway via the Center for Great Lakes Literacy at <https://www.cgll.org/>.