

NOVEMBER 2022 – REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

- **2023 Graduate Student Scholars Program**
- **2023 Faculty Scholars Program**

Program Description

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) Scholars programs provide professional networking and development opportunities for graduate students and faculty from institutes of higher learning in Illinois and Indiana who wish to develop extension, education, or communication capacities related to their scholarly interests. Awards are issued for one year and activities should be completed during that year. IISG expects to support 4–5 Graduate Student Scholars and 6 Faculty Scholars in 2023. *For 2023, at least three of the funded Faculty Scholar projects are expected to focus on research that supports resiliency along shorelines and in coastal communities.* See the Faculty Scholar section below for additional details. Projects are anticipated to start 1 March 2023 and end 29 February 2024.

One of IISG's long-term goals is to help build a community of researchers and outreach professionals focused on critically important Lake Michigan issues. The IISG Scholars programs are designed to help build this community by introducing researchers to the issues and the individuals, organizations, and communities that are affected by them. In addition, the programs are intended to help graduate student scholars further the impact of their research, and faculty scholars develop innovative, fundable proposals for future work in the region. Past scholar projects can be viewed at <https://iiseagrant.org/category/iisg-scholars/>.

We encourage individuals from all disciplines to apply for the IISG Scholars programs. IISG is committed to supporting justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. For this Request for Applications (RFA), IISG specifically encourages applicants who are, or have demonstrably recruited and engaged, students or fellows from untapped groups (particularly those whose backgrounds may have inhibited careers in science, technology, engineering, and math), as well as those whose proposed project outcomes have the potential to benefit underserved communities (because of geographic location, racial and ethnic status, and/or other special needs such as language barriers, disabilities, citizenship status or age). Applicants are encouraged to highlight these connections in their statement of interest. The full IISG values statement can be found at <https://iiseagrant.org/about/about-us/>.

Applicants are encouraged to contact IISG early with any questions about the program. Questions should primarily be directed to Research Coordinator Carolyn Foley (cfoley@purdue.edu). In addition, recordings outlining the technical aspects of applications, e.g., budget and forms preparation, are available at <https://iiseagrant.org/research/funding-opportunities/>.

Application Deadline

Applicants for both opportunities (graduate students and faculty) should submit materials via <https://esg.iiseagrant.org/> by **11:59 p.m. Central time on January 20, 2023**. Applications should be submitted to the "IL-IN SG 2023 Scholars Competition." Late applications will not be accepted unless the applicant has contacted IISG staff **before** the deadline to make them aware

of potential issues, (e.g., computer, power, or internet issues). IISG staff reserve the right to refuse late applications if the program determines that individual circumstances do not warrant an extension. IISG staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 pm Central time on January 20, 2023.

Review Panel

Applications for both opportunities will be reviewed by an external panel according to criteria listed below, with graduate students competing against other graduate students and faculty competing against other faculty. The panel will be comprised of applied research, extension, and communication personnel, plus professionals who are involved in the PIs' topic areas of interest (e.g., natural resources agency personnel, community planners). Some panelists may reside or work in Illinois or Indiana, i.e., not all panelists will be from out of state. All panelists must declare that they have no conflicts of interest with any proposal that they are reviewing.

Panelists will evaluate the applicants' suitability for program admission and provide a ranked order for the Graduate Student Scholars and a separate ranked order for the Faculty Scholars. The IISG administration will attempt to maximize the number of applications funded, given requests on the part of applicants whose proposals are deemed "fundable" and funds available for the competition. For Graduate Student Scholars, the IISG administration will fund applications in ranked order with one exception: if deemed appropriate by the panel, the IISG administration will spread funds across applicants from different institutions. For Faculty Scholars, the IISG administration will prioritize funding proposals that will support resiliency along shorelines and in coastal communities. For this competition, IISG has a goal of supporting at least 3 projects in this area. Past this, Faculty Scholar applicants will be funded in ranked order with one exception: if deemed appropriate by the panel, the IISG administration will spread funds across applicants from different institutions.

Program Timeline

- January 20, 2023: Applications due to IISG.
- February 2023: Review of applications and notification of graduate student and faculty scholars.
- March 1, 2023: Award initiation date.
- March–September 2023: Phase 1, including two networking events and development of at least one product in support of a larger proposal for faculty scholars; participation in several professional development activities for graduate student scholars.
- October 2023–February 2024: Phase 2, including further interactions with IISG staff members and additional professional development activity(ies) for faculty scholars; participation in several professional development activities for graduate student scholars.
- April 2024: Final proposals completed or already submitted to an external funding agency for faculty scholars; graduate students and faculty have presented final results to IISG and key partners.

Graduate Student Scholars

Award Amounts and Eligibility

Graduate student applicants can request up to \$9,000 to support research expenses, graduate student stipends, travel, or other activities that help expand the scholarly or societal impact of their research. **Matching funds are not required for graduate student applicants; however, indirect costs can be charged.**

The applicant must be enrolled as a graduate student at an institute of higher learning in Illinois or Indiana at some point during the 2023–24 academic year. An applicant must have someone in their home department who is eligible and willing to serve as administrative lead on the project. Applicants working with, or advised by, Sea Grant staff members are eligible for funding. It is preferable for administrative leads to not be Sea Grant staff members, although if this is not possible, the Sea Grant staff member can serve as administrative lead. Please contact Carolyn Foley (cfoley@purdue.edu) with questions or concerns. Graduate student scholars who have received an IISG Graduate Student Scholar grant in the past three years are not eligible for funding through the current competition.

While work proposed as part of this award should further the IISG mission to empower southern Lake Michigan communities to secure a healthy environment and economy and align with the [IISG 2018–2023 Strategic Plan](#), it may be acceptable to adapt research methods or results from other geographic locations locally. For example, a research project conducted in southern Indiana could be expanded to include northwest Indiana and/or northeast Illinois; methods developed in another region could be applied to southern Lake Michigan and surrounding communities.

Expectations of Graduate Student Scholars

During their scholar year, graduate student scholars are expected to:

1. Participate in at least four professional development activities, including Introduction to Sea Grant, Effective Communication via Social Media, Integrating Research and Extension, and Connecting Small Scale Research Projects to Broader Societal Impacts. Other offerings will vary with scholar cohort but may include discussions about job opportunities outside of academia, books or journals, or grant writing. Activities will not be scheduled more than one per month and may be conducted virtually.
2. Present results to IISG and key parties, e.g., the external advisory committee and/or partner organizations, in early 2024 (exact date TBD). Presentations will likely occur in person, in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois; West Lafayette, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois; or northwest Indiana. The graduate student applicant should consider budgeting travel funds into the award to attend this event.

Failure to participate in required activities may lead to forfeiture of funds.

Application Materials

Templates and guidance for the following components can be found at:

<https://iiseagrant.org/research/funding-opportunities/templates-and-guidance-for-proposal-submissions/>. All applications must include components 1 through 7.

1. **Front matter** (1 page). Include the applicant's name, the administrative lead's name, affiliations, physical and email addresses, total budget request, and an abstract that describes the proposed project outcomes (see 2a).
2. **Statement of interest** (3-page maximum). Statements of interest should describe a) activities that will be accomplished with award funds, including how these activities will allow the student to substantially improve their research and how these activities correspond to the IISG strategic plan; and b) why the applicant is interested in the IISG Scholars Program and how the program fits into the applicant's career goals. Applicants should write this section for a general audience, but include enough detail to allow for review per criteria listed below.
3. **Letter of Commitment** (1-page). The intent of this opportunity is for the graduate student to be the driving force behind all outcomes of the project. However, funds will be sent to the graduate student's institution rather than the student directly; thus, each applicant must identify an administrative lead for their project who can accept funds on their behalf. The student's major professor may serve in this capacity but this is not required, as long as someone is willing to serve as administrative lead. As noted above, it is preferable that Sea Grant staff members NOT serve as administrative leads, but this is allowed if there is no other option. The letter of commitment should come from the administrative lead, and confirm that the student is or will be enrolled at some point during the 2023-24 academic year and that the named person will support the student in their efforts. The letter of commitment will NOT be included in review materials.
4. **Budget requests** (90-4 form plus separate budget narrative). Applicants can request graduate student stipends, research material costs, indirect cost, fringe, travel, printing, publication and documentation costs, etc. Budgets should include travel to mandatory activities described above if other travel funds are not available to the student. Budget documents should list the administrative lead as the principal investigator and the student as co-investigator. Applicants may submit one additional page that outlines additional facilities, equipment, or other key components of the student's work that will help complete the project but has no funding request. This will be used for review purposes only.
5. **Applicant and Administrative Lead CVs** (2 pages each). NSF or NIH format is acceptable, but not required. The administrative lead's CV will NOT be included in review materials.
6. **Data Management Plan** (max. 2 pages). Under NOAA directives, environmental data generated during projects funded by IISG must be verified and shared within 2 years of completion of the project. The full definition of environmental data can be found at <https://iiseagrant.org/research/principal-investigator-resources/>. If your project will not generate environmental data, state that in your application. If your project will generate environmental data, download and complete the template, and return with your application. Lack of an adequate data management plan may result in delayed distribution of funds.

7. ***Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire*** (as many pages as needed). Download and complete the template. Answer every question considering all activities that will be completed by the applicant as part of the proposed funding. Provide copies of permits, IRB approval, and/or other forms, as appropriate.
8. ***Purdue University Letter of Intent Form*** (1 page). Download the template specific to the IISG Scholars 2023 competition. List the administrative lead as the principal investigator. This is not required for applicants from Purdue University and Purdue Northwest.
9. ***Purdue University Entity Profile*** (1 page). Download the template. This is not required for applicants from Purdue University and Purdue Northwest.

Application Review for Graduate Student Scholars

The application materials will be reviewed by an external panel. The panel will use the following criteria to prepare for the panel discussion, then will create a final ranked order during the panel, based on the discussion (i.e., scores here will not directly influence the ranked order):

Section 1: Based on the entire application package, please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being best (25 marks total):

1. The proposed work fits within IISG's strategic priorities. Note that applicants need not have a history of work directly related to Lake Michigan to be considered, but the proposed outcomes should align with IISG strategic priorities.
2. Expenses listed in the proposed budget are appropriate and logical lines can be drawn between the requested support and completion of the graduate student's proposed work. The budget request need not encompass all anticipated charges, as it is expected that graduate students will be building on resources already available to them.
3. The applicant's previous academic and professional record is strong. It is appropriate to consider the stage of an applicant's career when providing this rating.
4. On the whole, materials submitted suggest that the applicant will be able to develop products that help IISG achieve strategic goals.
5. On the whole, materials submitted suggest that the applicant's research will be substantially improved via this award.

Bonus points (up to 5): on the whole, materials submitted suggest that this application will benefit individuals or communities that have been historically underserved.

Section 2: Based on the entire application package, please provide an overall qualitative rating:

(A) Excellent – A truly meritorious project

(B) Good – A project that clearly deserves support but to which minor improvements are recommended to achieve desired outcomes

(C) Adequate – A project that should be supported, assuming major reservations related to achieving desired outcomes can be addressed

(D) Questionable – A project about which reservations are so serious that it should be supported only in exceptional circumstances

Faculty Scholars

Award Amounts and Eligibility

Faculty applicants can request up to \$15,000. Funds can be used to support research expenses, summer salary, graduate student stipends, travel, or other activities that support the proposed work and further the IISG mission to empower southern Lake Michigan communities to secure a healthy environment and economy. While work proposed as part of this award should further the IISG mission and align with the [IISG 2018–2023 Strategic Plan](#), it may be acceptable to adapt research methods or results from other geographic locations locally. For example, a research project conducted in southern Indiana could be expanded to include northwest Indiana and/or northeast Illinois; methods developed in another region could be applied to southern Lake Michigan and surrounding communities.

Applicants must be a faculty member at an institute of higher learning in Illinois or Indiana. Those who have received an IISG Scholars grant in the past three years are not eligible for funding through the current competition. *For 2023, at least three of the funded Faculty Scholar projects are expected to focus on research that supports resilient coastal communities.*

Resiliency can come in many forms but for purposes of this competition should be linked to responses to the changing natural world, e.g., effects of climate change, shoreline and water level changes, stormwater management, sustainable community planning, green infrastructure to mitigate negative outcomes, evacuation procedures, or access to financial resources that help mitigate effects of floods or other disasters.

Faculty who have a staff appointment with IISG are not eligible to compete for these funds. While it is possible for a faculty member and one or more of their graduate students to each receive awards through this funding opportunity, it is the responsibility of the faculty applicant to ensure that projects are sufficiently distinct from each other so as to justify multiple awards. As previously noted, IISG administration will attempt to distribute funding to a variety of institutions, as competition results allow.

Expectations of Faculty Scholars

During their scholar year, faculty scholars are expected to:

1. Develop at least one product that can be used to support a larger proposal. Example products include an initial data set, a detailed literature review, a completed needs assessment, a description of a research protocol, or similar products. Applicants should describe this product or suite of products in their application.
2. Participate in three networking and learning events at IISG and partner sites in and around southern Lake Michigan in 2023-24. During these events, scholars will interact with IISG stakeholders and staff members to 1) understand critical Lake Michigan issues, 2) understand the role IISG plays in helping address these issues, and 3) brainstorm about how scholars might support ongoing activities to address these issues. The specific dates for these events will be set in early 2023. **Scholars must attend all events to receive funds.**

3. Develop a research proposal, which combines research and outreach to address an IISG-approved topic relevant to the [IISG 2018–2023 Strategic Plan](#) and is to be submitted to an external funding agency. Scholars are encouraged, but not required, to work directly with IISG communication, education, outreach, and/or extension staff members while developing the proposal. The scholar should play a key role in proposal development, e.g., by serving as principal investigator or serving as main convener of the project team. Submission of this proposal to competitions for internal funds at the scholar's university or IISG does not meet the requirement, but submission of a proposal to a competition run by the National Sea Grant Office may. Questions about this requirement should be directed to Carolyn Foley (cfoley@purdue.edu).

Application Materials

Templates and guidance for the following components can be found at:

<https://iiseagrant.org/research/funding-opportunities/templates-and-guidance-for-proposal-submissions/>. All applications must include components 1 through 6.

1. **Front matter** (1 page). Include the applicant's name, affiliation, address, total budget request, and an abstract that describes the proposed project outcomes (see 2a).
2. **Statement of interest** (4-page maximum). Statements of interest should describe why the applicant is interested in the IISG Scholars Program and how the program fits into the applicant's career goals. In addition, the statement of interest should include a) 1–3 potential products that the scholar could develop as a result of participating in this program. Example products include an initial data set, a detailed literature review, a completed needs assessment, a description of a research protocol, or similar products. Product descriptions should provide enough detail that reviewers can understand the areas that the applicants are interested in working, but should be written for a general audience (i.e., do not assume that the reviewers are familiar with your area of expertise). Applicants should a) demonstrate how development of these products corresponds with the IISG strategic plan; and b) compile a list of potential competitions that the applicant would target with the full proposal to be developed by the end of the IISG Scholars Program.
3. **Budget requests** (90-4 form plus separate budget narrative). Applicants can request summer salary, graduate student stipends, indirect cost, fringe, travel, printing, publication and documentation costs, etc. For faculty, up to \$12,000 can be put toward salary and associated fringe. Budgets should include travel to mandatory activities described above if other travel funds are not available to the scholar. Successful applicants must demonstrate 50% match (1 non-federal dollar for every 2 dollars requested; e.g., if an applicant requests \$15,000, they must demonstrate at least \$7,500 in non-federal match for a total of \$22,500 that would go toward this work). Applicants may submit one additional page that outlines additional facilities, equipment, or other key components of the work that will help complete the project but has no funding request. This will be used for review purposes only.
4. **Applicant CV** (2 pages). NSF or NIH format is acceptable but not required.

5. **Data Management Plan** (max. 2 pages). Under NOAA directives, environmental data generated during projects funded by IISG must be verified and shared within 2 years of completion of the project. The full definition of environmental data can be found at <https://iiseagrant.org/research/principal-investigator-resources/>. If your project will not generate environmental data, state that in your application. If your project will generate environmental data, download and complete the template, and return with your application. Lack of an adequate data management plan may result in delayed distribution of funds.
6. **Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire** (as many pages as needed). Download and complete the template. Answer every question considering all activities that will be completed by the applicant as part of the proposed funding. Provide copies of permits, IRB approval, and/or other forms, as appropriate.
7. **Purdue University Letter of Intent Form** (1 page). Download the template specific to the IISG Scholars 2023 competition. This is not required for applicants from Purdue University and Purdue Northwest.
8. **Purdue University Entity Profile** (1 page). Download the template. This is not required for applicants from Purdue University and Purdue Northwest.

Application Review for Faculty Scholars

The application materials will be reviewed by an external panel. The panel will use the following criteria to prepare for the panel discussion, then will create a final ranked order during the panel, based on the discussion (i.e., scores here will not directly influence the ranked order):

Section 1: Based on the entire application package, please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being best (25 marks total):

1. The proposed work fits within IISG's strategic priorities. (Note that applicants need not have not have a history of work directly related to Lake Michigan to be considered, but the proposed outcomes should align with IISG strategic priorities.)
2. Expenses listed in the proposed budget are appropriate and logical lines can be drawn between the requested support and completion of the proposed work. The budget request need not encompass all anticipated charges, as it is expected that faculty scholars will be building on resources already available to them.
3. The applicant's previous academic and professional record is strong. (It is appropriate to consider the stage of an applicant's career when providing this rating.)
4. On the whole, materials submitted suggest that the applicant will be able to develop products that help IISG achieve strategic goals.
5. On the whole, materials submitted suggest that the applicant will be able to develop a successful proposal to an external funding agency.

Bonus points (up to 5): on the whole, materials submitted suggest that this application will benefit individuals or communities that have been historically underserved.

Section 2: Based on the entire application package, please provide an overall qualitative rating:

(A) Excellent – A truly meritorious project

(B) Good – A project that clearly deserves support but to which minor improvements are recommended to achieve desired outcomes

(C) Adequate – A project that should be supported, assuming major reservations related to achieving desired outcomes can be addressed

(D) Questionable – A project about which reservations are so serious that it should be supported only in exceptional circumstances