

Fiscal Year 2024 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

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## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Federal Agency Name(s):** Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Fiscal Year 2024 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

**Announcement Type:** Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:** NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007707

**Federal Assistance Listings Number:** 11.417, Sea Grant Support

**Dates:**

Eligible students must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on February 16, 2023 to eligible Sea Grant programs. Students enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant program must submit to that program. Other students must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the Knauss Fellowship Program Manager as listed in Section VII. Letters of intent outlining the selection process must be emailed to [oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) prior to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on March 15, 2023. Selected student applications from the eligible Sea Grant program are to be received and validated by grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on March 30, 2023. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. EDT.) Other than attaching the signed letter of recommendation from the eligible Sea Grant director, the application submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program by the applicant must be submitted to Grants.gov unchanged.

**Funding Opportunity Description:**

The National Sea Grant College Program was enacted by U.S. Congress in 1966 (amended in 2020, Public Law 116-221) to support leveraged federal and state partnerships that harness the intellectual capacity of the nation's universities and research institutions to solve problems and generate opportunities in coastal communities.

This notice announces that applications may be submitted for the 2024 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program). The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) anticipates funding not less than 35 applicants, of which approximately 17 will be assigned to the

Legislative branch. Application packages will each propose a total of \$90,500 in funding. Detailed breakout of this funding is described in Section II.A and Section III.F of this announcement.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to the Sea Grant program in their state/territory at least one to two months prior to the state application deadline to receive application support and provide notification of intent to apply. Following student application submission, the student should allow sufficient time to schedule an interview with the eligible Sea Grant program at the program's request.

This document describes requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007707.

## **I. Funding Opportunity 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 by providing assistance to 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 USC 1121(b).

### **B. Program Priorities**

The Sea Grant Act includes a legislative mandate to provide an educational experience in the policies and processes of the legislative and executive branches of the federal government for students enrolled in graduate or professional programs that have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. In 1979, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) initiated the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program to help fulfill its broad educational responsibilities and meet this legislative mandate. The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program meets NOAA's mission of "Science, service and stewardship."

The National Sea Grant College Program values diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in both our organization and the communities we serve. Through the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship we strive to provide an educational and employment opportunity for current and recent graduate students interested in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and the national policy decisions affecting those resources, regardless of race, color, religion, place of origin, gender,

sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, disability or veteran status.

### **C. Program Authority**

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

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. Funding Availability**

Subject to the availability of funding, this announcement describes how eligible applicants should apply for the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program. Sea Grant anticipates funding not less than 35 applicants, of which those assigned to the legislative branch will be approximately 17. Application packages will each propose a total of \$90,500 in funding. This includes base funding for each award at \$73,000, of which \$68,000 is to be used by the eligible Sea Grant program to cover the fellow's salary/stipend and personnel expenses for the twelve months of the fellowship and \$5,000 can be used to cover allowable expenses. Allowable expenses could include, but are not limited to, relocation prior to and following the fellowship, academic tuition, journal publication fees, academic- and fellowship-related travel, conferences fees, online trainings, and workshops. Applications should also include travel costs totaling \$17,500, of which \$15,000 will be budgeted for optional host office related travel and training and \$2,500 will be budgeted for optional placement week expenses, which would be provided at the discretion of the National Sea Grant Office.

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, they do so at their 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 full funding.

### **B. Project/Award Period**

The anticipated start date is February 1, 2024 for the 12-month fellowship. Projects should have an end date of February 28, 2025. These awards cannot be renewed or deferred. Pre-award spending may be authorized 120 days prior to the start date of the award.

### **C. Type of Funding Instrument**

The funding instrument is a cooperative agreement to an eligible institution, which will receive and administer the overall cooperative agreement on behalf of each fellow selected. A cooperative agreement is used when substantial involvement of the federal government during the performance of the proposed work is anticipated. The nature of the substantial involvement includes mentoring and hosting of applicants by Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager(s) and host offices.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

The following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity:

Any student, regardless of citizenship, is eligible to submit to this opportunity if:

- (1) The student is enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program at any point between the onset of the 2022 Fall Term (quarter, trimester, semester, etc.) and February 16, 2023;
- (2) The graduate degree will be awarded through an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. Territories, and;
- (3) The student has an interest in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources.

Application submission is through an application to the Sea Grant program in the state in which the student is earning their degree. If there is no Sea Grant program, a Sea Grant program will be assigned (see Section IV.D.)

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by working to create a marine science workforce that reflects the communities we serve. We are 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 student applicants of all ages, races, 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 types to apply for this opportunity.

#### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement**

No cost share is required.

### **C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility**

- The one year fellowship will take place in the National Capital Region. Applicants must be prepared to relocate to the Washington, D.C. area. Non-U.S. citizens are responsible for obtaining the appropriate visa to allow them to work in the Washington, D.C. area during the fellowship period.
- Foreign nationals and dual citizens please note: while this fellowship is open to all eligible students regardless of nationality, a significant number of participating federal host offices are unable to accept foreign nationals as fellows. While more offices are able to host dual citizens, there may be restrictions. This may reduce the number of placement opportunities available to foreign nationals. Note: Foreign nationals are eligible for both the Executive and Legislative cohort.
- Applicants must be able to pass a federal background security check.
- Prior contact/arrangements made with possible host offices before the start of the placement week will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process.
- Applicants that have been accepted as national finalists and/or become fellows are not eligible to apply again without the written permission of the NSGO Fellowships Manager, which will only be granted in response to exceptional life events. A national finalist is defined as an applicant who goes through the review process and is selected at the national level for the fellowship program. If alternates are selected, they are eligible for re-application if they withdraw prior to accepting a finalist position or are not offered a finalist position and would otherwise still be eligible to apply. Applicants are considered finalists until they are paired with a host office during the placement process.

## **IV. Application and Submission Information**

### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Application packages are available online and can be downloaded from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2024-2007707. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Applicants enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory not served by a Sea Grant program must first contact the Agency Contact listed in Section VII to obtain a written referral to an eligible Sea Grant program. This referral must be included in the application package.

## **B. Content and Form of the Application**

This section provides an overview of the Required Proposal Elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Proposal Elements" below. 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.

The submitting Sea Grant program or applicant should redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII that should be redacted from the application includes but is not limited to social security number, date of birth, student identification number (from transcripts) or other information which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

All applications should be submitted in the following order: CV, Application Questions, Future Year Plans, Director Letter, Academic Letter, Other Letter, Transcripts.

### **Letters of Intent Required Elements**

Letters of Intent (LOIs) will be requested in advance of final proposal submission to allow the NSGO to gauge the number of expected applications to be submitted by **the Sea Grant programs**. LOIs should be received via digital submissions to the NSGO Fellowship Program Managers (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on March 15, 2023.

Letters of Intent should provide the following information:

#### **1. Sea Grant Applicant Information (spreadsheet/table)**

A list of all applications received by the state program including,

- i. Student Name,
- ii. Student's Academic Institution,
- iii. Degree the student is seeking,
- iv. Indication if the applicant is recommend for national review,
- v. Demographics Information:

NOAA will not provide collected demographics information to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.

1. Please 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). For the purposes of this letter of intent, the named collaborators refer specifically to the named students, not other individuals potentially named.



2. 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 Islanders
  - f) Other persons 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. **Summary of the State Review Process** (one page max)

- a) A brief discussion of the review process including information regarding the directors interview and the panel selection process.
- b) A brief discussion of the recruitment process focusing on how programs engaged diverse schools and audiences.

Programs will receive email confirmation of LOI receipt by COB March 17, 2023.

**Full Proposal Required Elements**

(please also see VIII. Other Information for additional post-application required elements for submission):

1. **Project Narrative** - The Project Narrative must include the following elements:
  - a. **Project Proposal Narrative.** The project proposal narrative must contain the following sub-elements.

The following sub-elements are to be submitted by the student to the eligible Sea Grant program:

(1) Curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages). The student should not include personal contact information or web links to external resources (e.g., LinkedIn, articles, blogs, etc.). If included, programs should redact excess materials prior to submission to Grants.gov.

(2) Personal education and career development response. The student should

emphasize their abilities and expectations of the fellowship experience in terms of their career development. Each section and subsequent subsection should be answered separately. The entire personal education and career development section should not exceed 1,500 words total. Suggested word counts will be included with each subsection below. Section headers will count as part of the overall word count. The student should not include personal contact information or web links to external resources (e.g., LinkedIn, articles, blogs, etc.). If included, programs should redact prior to submission.

- Section One: Icebreaker. The suggested word count is 25 words for this section.
  - \* (suggest 20 words) The student should use one sentence to describe themselves.
  - \* (5 words MAX--this is the only question with a strict word count): The student should list five adjectives that someone with a close personal connection (coworker, supervisor, etc.) would use to describe them.
- Section Two: Career Path and Objectives. This section can be completed as one continuous statement or as separate responses. The suggested word count is 700 words for this section.
  - \* (Suggest 250 words) The student should discuss any experience(s) (research or otherwise) that supports or relates to the mission of the National Sea Grant College Program or the state Sea Grant program (the student does not have to have had a direct connection to Sea Grant). The student should emphasize (if relevant) any experience with extending and distilling science for non-scientific audiences.
  - \* (Suggest 250 words) The student should discuss their interest in the Knauss Fellowship with a specific focus on how the Knauss Fellowship supports the student's career pathway. The student should focus on how the Knauss Program would further support their development as a professional.
  - \* (Suggest 200 words) The student should discuss the transferable skills (skills that can be applied across a variety of disciplines) that they would bring to the Knauss Fellowship. In this response, students should highlight experiences from their personal, professional and academic background.
- Section Three: Career Path Experience. The suggested word count is 700 words for this section.
  - \* (Suggest 300 words) Sea Grant values the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, justice and accessibility. The student should discuss (1) how they have collaborated or engaged with diverse community members and/or interested partners and/or (2) how they would be an ambassador for these principles throughout the Knauss program.

\* (Suggest 400 words) The student should discuss a situation in which they overcame a challenge (e.g. within a community or institution, personally, professionally, etc.) specifically as it relates to how they took a leadership role. The student should also consider including a reflection on what they learned from this experience.

(3) Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans (not to exceed one page single spaced):

The student should discuss any relevant coursework and their future year activities.

Relevant Coursework: The student may discuss any completed or in progress classes that they deem relevant to their success in the Knauss Fellowship Program. Future year activities: The student should include a listing of classes and/or plans for spring 2023, summer 2023, and fall 2023.

(4) Two letters of recommendation from individuals who have worked with the student, including at least one from a faculty member associated with the student's current enrolment who has knowledge of the student's academic and research (when applicable) performance. Each letter should not exceed two pages single spaced. These letters should discuss the following attributes of the student: self-motivation, response to setbacks, skills and involvement in teamwork, collaborative leadership skills, willingness to learn a new skill or topic, academic performance and potential. Additionally, the letters should speak to anything else the review panel should know about the strengths that the student will bring to the fellowship. The letters should not include personal contact information or web links to external resources (e.g., LinkedIn, articles, blogs, etc.). If included, programs should redact prior to submission. Any letters beyond the two letters of recommendation and the eligible Sea Grant director's letter will be disregarded by the selection panel. Letters of endorsement from members of Congress, friends, or relatives will not be accepted.

(5) Clear digital or scanned copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts (unofficial are acceptable).

(6) If applicable, for applicants in a state or territory not served by an eligible Sea Grant program, but applying through an eligible Sea Grant program, a written statement from the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager referring the applicant to the most appropriate eligible Sea Grant program must be included as part of that applicant's application package to the Sea Grant program.

The following sub-element is to be submitted by the program:

(1) A signed letter of recommendation from the state Sea Grant director, which is built from an interview with the applicant. As part of that interview and subsequent letter,

the director shall:

- (a) demonstrate why the student aligns with the goals of the Knauss program;
- (b) highlight the skills the student emphasizes in the interview;
- (c) explain any gaps in the CV or personal education and career development response or anything that the student feels they were unable to include in the application that they feel is important for the review panel to know; and
- (d) advocate for why this student belongs in the Knauss Fellowship Program.

If a conflict of interest exists, please contact the agency contact (Section VII).

**b. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire** (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)

This announcement is not seeking proposals that will have an environmental impact. Therefore, an abbreviated environmental compliance questionnaire is not required as part of the proposal.

**c. Data Management Plan**

This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the Proposal.

**2. Budget Narrative**

(to be submitted by the Program)

The budget narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justification) in the following order and format.

*a) 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 proposal and each project in this application. Please submit one 90-4 form covering the full 13-month period of the award.

*b) Budget Justification*

A budget justification explains budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. This document should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate.

**3. Overall Application**

In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are

required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) or on the [Sea Grant website](#). These include:

*a) SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)*

This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period (**February 1, 2024 to February 28, 2025**), as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant. 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. Note: for the Knauss Fellowship, no match is required.

*b) SF-424A Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006)*

This form, titled “Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs,” must describe the entire funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Federal years should each have their own column. Note: for the Knauss Fellowship, no match is required.

*c) 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.

*d) CD-511 (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce)*

The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.

*e) SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046)*

The form, titled “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

### **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**

Eligible applicants must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on February 16, 2023 to the appropriate Sea Grant program. Students enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant Program must submit to that program. Other students must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the Knauss Fellowship Program Manager as listed in Section VII. Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant program are to be received and validated by grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on March 30, 2023. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. EDT.) Other than attaching the signed letter of recommendation from the eligible Sea Grant Director or appropriate redactions the sub-elements submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program by the applicant must be submitted to grants.gov unchanged.

**Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission.** Eligible Sea Grant programs should consider this process in developing their submission timeline. For eligible Sea Grant program applications submitted through grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

#### **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**

Indirect costs are not allowable for either the Fellowship or for any costs associated with the Fellowship (15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships").

The eligible Sea Grant program receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement. Application packages will each propose a total of \$90,500 in funding. This includes base funding for each award at \$73,000, of which \$68,000 is to be used by the eligible Sea Grant program to cover the fellow's salary/stipend for the twelve months of the fellowship and \$5,000 can be used to cover allowable expenses. Allowable expenses could include, but are not limited to, relocation prior to the fellowship, academic tuition, journal publication fees, academic- and fellowship-related travel, conferences fees, online trainings, and workshops. Applications should also include travel costs totaling \$17,500, of which \$15,000 will be budgeted for optional host office related travel and training and \$2,500 will be budgeted for optional placement week expenses, which would be provided at the discretion of the National Sea Grant Office.

Other restrictions: Fellowship funds may not be used to travel to State Department Level three or four countries without prior approval of the National Sea Grant Office.

### **G. Other Submission Requirements**

Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant Program must be submitted electronically to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by the application deadline.

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **A. Evaluation Criteria**

- 1) Relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; and interpersonal, written and oral communication skills and other applicable competencies (75 Points). For the Knauss Fellowship Program, this includes the curriculum vitae, personal education and career development response, and Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans which will be reviewed as follows.
  - Curriculum Vitae (10 Points). The point scale is as follows: The CV is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-3 points); the CV adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the CV exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
    - The student has employment, volunteer, or extracurricular activities in academic, applied, research, administration, outreach, or policy positions;
    - The education and experience (personal and professional) in the student's area

of expertise are appropriate to the career stage;

- The student demonstrates academic, professional or personal experiences that are relevant and applicable to serving the American people;
- The student's experiences show prior leadership roles relevant to their career stage (e.g., student government, faculty committees, advisory committees, professional societies, community initiatives, etc.).

2) Personal education and career development response.

- Section One: Icebreaker (5 Points). The point scale is as follows: The icebreaker does not adequately address expectations outlined below (0-1 points); the icebreaker adequately addresses expectations outlined below (2-3 points); the icebreaker exceeds expectations outlined below (4-5 points).
  - The student demonstrates creative thinking and a willingness to think outside the box.
- Section Two: Career Path and Objectives (25 Points). The point scale is as follows: The career path and objectives does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-8 points); the career path and objectives adequately addresses expectations outlined below (9-18 points); the career path and objectives exceeds expectations outlined below (19-25 points).
  - The career path and objectives are specific, direct, and concise while discussing what the student would bring to and gain from the Knauss fellowship;
  - The student clearly articulates their career or professional goal;
  - The career path and objectives demonstrates the student's diverse personal and professional background;
  - The student demonstrates creative thinking, analytical skill, and/or indicates their capacity and willingness to make connections between science and broader economic, social, and political issues;
  - The student demonstrates their ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts;
  - The career path and objectives align with the broader mission of the Sea Grant program and NOAA.
- Section Three: Career Path Experience (25 Points). The point scale is as follows: The career path experience does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-8 points); the career path experiences adequately addresses expectations outlined below (9-18 points); the career path experiences exceeds expectations outlined below (19-25 points).
  - The student has shown interest in working with diverse collaborators, community members and/or interested partners;
  - The student demonstrates an interest in or commitment to the Sea Grant values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Accessibility;



- The student's experience demonstrates a commitment to apply expertise to serve science and society;
  - The student demonstrates creativity and willingness to navigate a challenging situation;
  - The student demonstrates leadership and problem solving initiative.
- 3) Relevant Coursework and Future year plans (10 Points). The point scale is as follows: the relevant coursework and future year plans are unclear and do not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the relevant coursework and future year plans adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the relevant coursework and future year plans exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
- The student has activities in academic, applied, research, administration, outreach, or policy;
  - The future education and experience (personal or professional) support the student's goals or provide further experiences applicable to the Knauss Program.
- 4) Recommendations and/or endorsements of the student (15 points total). For the Knauss Fellowship program the endorsements and content of the letter from the student's Sea Grant director, academic reference, and the second letter of recommendation are reviewed as follows.
- Letters of recommendation (5 Points designated for each letter of recommendation). The point scale is as follows: the letters of recommendation do not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-1 points); the letters of recommendation adequately address expectations outlined below (2-3 points); the letters of recommendation exceed expectations outlined below (4-5 points).
    - The letter writers demonstrate knowledge of the student and their abilities;
    - The letter writers speak to the leadership potential, confidence, maturity, and self-direction of the student;
    - The letter writers provide evidence of the student's willingness and flexibility to tackle issues beyond their area of expertise and an openness and capacity to expand experiences;
    - The letter writers provide evidence of the student's ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts.
  - Director's Letter (5 Points). The point scale is as follows: the director's letter is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-1 points); the director's letter adequately addresses expectations outlined below (2-3 points); the director's letter exceeds expectations outlined below (4-5 points).
    - The director's letter demonstrates how the student fits with the Knauss Program, including any discussion of why the student belongs in the Knauss Program;
    - Highlights the skills (academic, professional or personal) that the student would bring to the Knauss program;

- Elaborates on information not specifically addressed by the student in their application package.
- 5) Overall application cohesion (10 points total). For the Knauss Fellowship program consider all aspects of the application materials (CV, Personal education and career development responses, Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans, Letters of Recommendation, Directors Letter). The point scale is as follows: the application is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the application adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the application exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
- The application materials complement each other;
  - The student brings a diverse perspective to the program;
  - The application materials provide a clear picture of what the student would gain from receiving the Knauss Fellowship;
  - The application materials provide a clear picture of what the student would bring to the Knauss Fellowship

At the national review, evaluation criteria are identical to that at the eligible Sea Grant program level, except that in criteria (3), the letter of endorsement from the eligible Sea Grant program director will also be considered.

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

### State level/individual Sea Grant program review:

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

After submission to the eligible Sea Grant program, and if the application meets the minimum requirements (sub-elements 1-6, Section IV.B.1.a), the application will be reviewed at the eligible Sea Grant program level. A panel composed of a minimum of three members will individually discuss each application based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A..

Based on the panel discussion, each eligible Sea Grant program may select and forward to the National Sea Grant Office up to six applications from that program's state/territory based on the evaluation criteria. In addition, up to six additional applications from each non-Sea Grant state/territory may be submitted by the eligible Sea Grant program handling those applications.

### National Level Review:

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

For applications that meet minimum requirements, the application will be individually ranked based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. by individual reviewers.

The selecting official shall award in the rank order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the selection factors provided below. The selecting official shall make final recommendations for award to the grants officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

### **C. Selection Factors**

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

- Balance/distribution of funds:
  - across academic disciplines
  - by type of institution
  - geographically
- Availability of funding.
- Program-specific objectives.
- Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought.

### **D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

Subject to the availability of funds, the eligible Sea Grant programs will be notified of the competitive selection results by June 2023 and awards are expected to start February 01, 2024.

After final selection and announcement of Knauss Finalists, the Selecting Official will place applicants into either the legislative or executive cohort. Selection of executive and legislative cohorts will be informed by finalists' stated preference (solicited after the announcement of the finalist class), recommendations from the eligible Sea Grant program director and independent reviewers, as well as the selection factors.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices**

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) will notify each unsuccessful applicant by informing the eligible Sea Grant program director through which the application was submitted via e-mail. The state Sea Grant programs will, in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and

forward the summary comments provided by the NSGO.

## **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 apply 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. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at [https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF\\_0.pdf](https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf)

(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.

(5) 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.

(6) 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.

(7) 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.

(8) 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%20vessel%29%20%281%29.pdf>

### **C. Reporting**

Fellows must submit via email a mid-year and a final performance report (summary of accomplishments and activities) to their Sea Grant program. Fellows must submit their mid-year report to their home Sea Grant program via email no later than six months from the start of the fellowship. Fellows must submit their final report to their home Sea Grant program via email within two weeks of the final day of the fellowship.

Sea Grant programs are required to submit all reports via Grants Online. The first Research Project Progress Report (RPPR) will be available in Grants Online nine months after the start date of award. Programs may use the fellow's mid-year performance report

to satisfy this report. At the conclusion of the award, the Sea Grant program must submit a comprehensive, final RPPR via Grants Online 120 days after the award expiration date. The final project progress report will include the last interim reporting period.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (31 U.S.C. 6101 Note) includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

Contact the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program; Tel: (240) 507-3712; E-mail: [oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov)

## **VIII. Other Information**

Recipients are required to use the National Sea Grant 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.

Once the applicants have been selected, programs will need to provide the information requested in the Sea Grant 90-2 into the PIER project database. Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the National Sea Grant College Program public website (<http://seagrants.noaa.gov>).

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 application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt.

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.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 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 Notice of 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 CFR § 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.