

2023 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics

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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: 2023 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007709

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates:

Eligible interested students must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m., local time on Wednesday, January 25, 2023 to eligible Sea Grant programs. Interested 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 interested students must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the NMFS-SG Fellowship Program Manager listed in [Section VII](#). Letters of Intent (LOI) should be submitted from eligible Sea Grant programs via email to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) Fellowship Program Managers (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on Wednesday, February 8, 2023. Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant program are to be received and validated in Grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. ET on Wednesday, February 24, 2023. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. ET). The application submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program by the interested student must be submitted to Grants.gov unchanged.

Funding Opportunity Description:

The National Sea Grant College Program was enacted by the 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 2023 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics. When an interested student is applying, be sure to specify your project's focus area in your title page: either

Population and Ecosystem Dynamics (PED), or Marine Resource Economics (MRE). See Section IV.B, Content and Form of Application, for more information.

Population and Ecosystem Dynamics: Sea Grant anticipates funding at least four new Ph.D. fellowships in 2023 to students who are interested in careers related to marine ecosystem and population dynamics, with a focus on modeling and managing systems of living marine resources. The emphasis will be on the development and implementation of quantitative methods for evaluating marine ecosystems for assessing the status of fish, invertebrate, and other targeted species stocks and for assessing the status of marine mammals, seabirds, and other protected species.

Marine Resource Economics: Sea Grant anticipates funding at least one new Ph.D. fellowship in 2023 to students who are interested in careers related to the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources.

Fellows will work on thesis problems of public interest and relevance to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the guidance of NMFS mentors at participating NMFS Science Centers or Offices. The NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics meets NOAA's healthy oceans goal of "marine fisheries, habitats, biodiversity sustained with healthy and productive ecosystems."

Application packages may propose up to \$58,333 in federal funding plus at least 20% matching (\$11,667) funding per year. These awards will be jointly funded by NMFS and Sea Grant. These fellowships can provide support for up to three years.

Interested students are strongly encouraged to reach out to the Sea Grant program in their state/territory at least one month prior to the state application deadline to receive application support and provide notification of intent to apply.

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007709. Additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application are provided in the Sea Grant General Application Guide available at <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>.

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).

The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) support Ph.D. graduate fellowships in two specific areas (1) population and ecosystem dynamics (PED) and (2) marine resource economics (MRE). The intent of this opportunity is to award a limited number of fellowships each year to students who are interested in careers related to population and ecosystem dynamics and marine resource economics with applications to living marine resources to achieve climate-ready fisheries using an ecosystem-based fishery management approach.

Student projects will focus on at least one of the following: 1) the population dynamics of living marine resources including protected species and species for which we seek sustainable fisheries; 2) stock assessment methodologies; 3) marine ecosystem modeling; 4) integrated ecosystem assessments; 5) ecosystem-based management of marine ecosystems; 6) economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources; and 7) quantitative survey analytical methodologies. These projects need to have a strong quantitative and applied resource management emphasis.

The fellowship can provide support for up to three years for highly qualified graduate students working towards a Ph.D. in quantitative programs including ecology, ecosystem ecology, population dynamics or related fields of study such as wildlife biology, fishery biology, marine biology, quantitative ecology, applied mathematics, applied statistics, simulation modeling, marine resource economics, natural resource economics, or environmental economics.

If selected, each fellow will be required to work closely with an expert (mentor) from NMFS who may provide data for a fellow's thesis, serve on the fellow's committee, and/or host an annual summer internship at the participating NMFS facility. Mentors will be from participating NMFS Science Centers or offices.

B. Program Priorities

Sea Grant is seeking applications for its fellowship programs to fulfill its broad educational responsibilities, enhance workforce development, and to strengthen the collaboration between Sea Grant and the NMFS. Selected fellows will work on thesis problems of public interest and relevance to NMFS and work with NMFS mentors at participating NMFS Science Centers or offices. The program priorities for this opportunity support NOAA's overarching priorities, specifically by providing the science needed to further integrate changing ocean conditions into an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and to model and forecast those effects on fish stocks, their habitat and seafood productivity.

The goals of the program are to 1) encourage qualified students to pursue careers in population and ecosystem dynamics related to living marine resources; 2) encourage qualified students to pursue careers in marine resource economics; 3) increase available expertise related to quantitative ecology for systems of living marine resources; 4) increase available expertise related to

the economic analysis of living marine resource conservation and management decisions; 5) foster closer relationships between academic scientists and NMFS; 6) provide real-world experience to graduate students and accelerate their career development; and 7) support graduate students from diverse backgrounds with an interest in population dynamics or marine resource economics.

For those interested students with population and ecosystem dynamics topics: The fellowship covers both population and ecosystem dynamics to ensure support for fellows who conduct research in support of living marine resource assessments as well as conduct broadly-scoped ecosystem assessments, implement ecosystem-based management, and evaluate system-level considerations of living marine resources. As both ecosystem and population dynamics rely heavily on quantitative marine ecology methods and skills, this announcement reflects that underlying commonality.

Similarly for those students interested in marine resource economics topics: The fellowship supports fellows who conduct research evaluating the benefits and costs of alternative management actions for commercial fisheries by analyzing critical fishery management issues. Helping to ensure the sustainability and maximization of societal benefits from marine resources. As marine resource economics relies heavily on quantitative economics methods and skills, this announcement reflects that underlying commonality.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the National Sea Grant College 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 2023 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics. Subject to the availability of funding, the fellowship program expects to award at least four new Ph.D. fellowships to students who are interested in careers related to population and ecosystem dynamics of living marine resources and/or marine ecosystem dynamics, and at least one new Ph.D. fellowship to students who are interested in careers related to marine resource economics.

The award for each fellowship will be a multi-year cooperative agreement in an amount not to exceed \$58,333 in federal funds per year for up to three years. Matching funds of 20% of the total federal request are required, as described in Section III.B.

Continued support after the first year will be contingent upon the availability of federal funds and satisfactory performance by the grantee.

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 a project fails to receive full funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is August 1, 2023, with projects to be completed by July 31 2026.

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 nature of the substantial involvement includes NMFS mentoring and hosting successful fellows. This involvement may include serving for 10-20 days aboard a research or commercial vessel during a scientific survey or experimental activity. Additionally, the fellow may work on their thesis research or related activity at a participating NMFS facility. The fellow's work will be overseen by a NMFS mentor who will provide advice and guidance.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity:

Full applications submitted to Grants.gov must come from an eligible Sea Grant program. Prospective fellows enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant program must submit to that program. Applications that are not approved and submitted by the student's state Sea Grant program will not be considered for review.

Those eligible to submit to a Sea Grant Program:

- 1) Prospective fellows must be United States citizens.
- 2) At the time of application, prospective fellows must be admitted to a Ph.D. degree program at a U.S. accredited university in the U.S. in population dynamics, ecosystem dynamics, resource or environmental economics, or a related field such as wildlife biology, fishery biology, natural resource management, marine biology, quantitative ecology, applied mathematics, applied statistics, or simulation modeling at an institution of higher education in the United States or its territories.
- 3) Alternatively, a prospective fellow may submit a signed letter from the institution indicating provisional acceptance to a Ph.D. degree program conditional on obtaining financial support such

as this fellowship.

Interested students in states or territories without a Sea Grant program must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the NMFS Fellowship Program Manager listed in section VII.

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 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

Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 20 percent (20%) of the federal funding request must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted, such as the waiver for insular areas granted by the Department of Commerce pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a. The cumulative match at the end of each year of the grant must not fall below 20 percent of the cumulative federal request up to that point. For example, if \$58,333 in federal funds is requested (the maximum allowable annual request), matching funds must be at least \$11,667. In other words, applications may not ‘under’ match in year one and ‘over’ match in year two. In-kind contributions from an advisor or NMFS mentor directly supporting this application may count towards this matching requirement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available online and can be downloaded from www.grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007709. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Interested students 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 these required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required 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 must redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII that must 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.

Required Elements:

Letter of Intent Requirements

Letters of Intent must provide the following information:

1. Sea Grant Applicant Information (spreadsheet/table)

- a. Sea Grant Applicant Information (spreadsheet/table). A list of all applications received by the state program including,

1. Student Name,
2. Student's Academic Institution,
3. Degree the student is seeking,
4. The program should indicate which applications they intend to recommend for national review;
5. Demographics Information:

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

- i. 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.
- ii. 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 recruitment process focusing specifically on how programs recruited and engaged potential applicants from diverse schools and audiences.

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 email by the NSGO Fellowship Program Managers (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, February 8, 2023.

Programs will receive email confirmation of LOI receipt by COB Thursday, February 9, 2023.

Full Proposal Required Elements

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

1. Proposal Narrative Documents. Applications must include the following documents:

- a) **Project 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.
 - i. Title page (must not exceed one page).
 - It should include the name and contact information of the prospective fellow, the title of the proposal, a brief project abstract, and should specify your project's focus area (either PED or MRE).
 - Depending on the student's research /concentration, the proposal title should read either "Last name_PED" or "Last name_MRE" as a prefix.
 - ii. Project proposal. (must not exceed five pages).

The project proposal is intended to describe the proposed dissertation or the general intended area of study. The proposal itself must not exceed five pages single spaced. If a proposal is longer than five pages, only the first five

will be shared with reviewers. References and figures should be included as an appendix and do not count towards the five page limit. It must be written by the prospective fellow and include the following:

- the number of years for which fellowship support is being sought;
- a brief summary of the work to be completed;
- a rationale for the proposed activity;
- scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested;
- appropriate details on methodology, and relevance of results.

Candidate projects will focus on at least one of the following: 1) the population dynamics of living marine resources; 2) stock assessment and survey methodologies; 3) marine ecosystem modeling; 4) integrated ecosystem assessments; 5) ecosystem-based management of marine ecosystems; and 6) economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources. Interdisciplinary topics are encouraged.

- iii. Education and career goal statement from the student. (must not exceed two pages single spaced). If a career goal statement is longer than two pages, only the first two pages will be shared with reviewers. The statement should discuss the student's interest in:
 - the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources, and/or
 - quantitative marine ecology, with a focus on one or more of the following: development and implementation of methods for assessing marine ecosystems and/or stock status of living marine resources; ecosystem-based management; population dynamics of managed aquatic animals; quantitative survey methodologies; commitment to apply scientific expertise to serve society equitably (consider academics, volunteer activities, professional activities or personal experiences).
- iv. Curriculum vitae (CV): The student, the faculty advisor, and the NMFS mentor must each submit a CV which is not to exceed 2 pages. The CVs 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. If a CV is longer than two pages, only the first two pages will be shared with reviewers.
- v. Summary of academic training in quantitative methods: Provide a one-page single spaced maximum summary describing your academic training in quantitative methods; a listing of your top five classes in quantitative methods already taken; and classes you intend to take over the spring 2023 semester. Class listings should include course name (though course number

e.g., MA 551 can be excluded) and a short description of content covered in course.

- vi. Clear copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts. These copies may be either official or unofficial transcripts. For students who have been accepted but not yet enrolled in a current Ph.D. program, the program's acceptance letter is adequate to fill the requirement of Ph.D. transcripts.
- vii. A minimum of two signed letters of recommendation. Each letter of recommendation must not exceed two pages single spaced. If a letter is longer than two pages, only the first two will be shared with reviewers. Each letter should describe and highlight any relevant historical or future conditions that have impacted the challenge identified. The letters must be from the following individuals:
 - The student's faculty advisor. The letters should discuss the following attributes of the student: quantitative skills, self-motivation, response to setbacks, skills and involvement in teamwork, academic and performance and/or potential. (If multiple advisors are contributing, each one should provide a separate letter.)
 - The student's NMFS mentor. In addition to noting the NMFS staff member's commitment to serve as a mentor, letters from NMFS mentors should briefly address the relevance of the research to NMFS, as well as a statement of broader impacts of the proposal. If multiple mentors are contributing, each one should provide a separate letter.

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

- The student **must** ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full and includes detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information.
- A separate questionnaire must be completed for each relevant action/project in the proposal.
- The questionnaire can be found [here](#).
- Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire, including how to describe work that will not involve any environmental impact, can be found [here](#). Examples of questionnaires can be found [here](#).

If detailed information is not provided, NOAA via the federal program officer, may request additional information or place a specific award condition on the fellowship award prohibiting specific activities, if permits or other environmental compliance documentation is not

currently available.

c) Data Management Plan (not to exceed 2 pages)

- All applications **must** include a Data Management Plan that is compliant with NOAA's [Public Access to Research Results](#) Plan. The Data Management Plan should not exceed 2 pages. The Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of metadata and data expected to be created during the course of the project, plans for disseminating the metadata and data to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of the metadata and data.
- If proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, such as the scoping activities and research competition, please include the following statement at the end of your proposal: "Because this project will not generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is not required. "For more information, see Section VI.B.(9). For reference: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf

2. Budget Narrative Documents

The budget narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justification) in the following order and format. Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justifications must be included for each individual project within an application. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found at:

https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf

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

Sea Grant 90-4 forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form should be completed for each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3). The Sea Grant 90-4 form can be downloaded at: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>.

b) Budget Justification

For each year of the project (or each individual project within an application), a budget justification is required. Each budget justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each budget justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 form, as appropriate.

The budget should include funds for travel to the annual Fellows Symposium and may include funds for stipend, tuition, fees, equipment, supplies, discretionary travel, and other

reasonable and appropriate project costs (see [Section II, "Award Information"](#)). Sub-contracts, if any, should have a separate budget page.

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](#) or on the [Sea Grant website](#). These include:

a) SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004) 24

This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period (**August 1, 2023 - July 31, 2026**) 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 UEI and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

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 (broken out by year if multi-year) 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 with separate columns for each year of federal funding as well as each year of non-federal funding. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).

*c) Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B
(Form found on [Inside Sea Grant](#), OMB Control No. 4060-0006)*

The SF-424A form described above only includes space to report the applicant’s yearly federal and non-federal dollars over two years. If the application includes more than two years of federal and non-federal dollars, please complete the additional SF-424A, Extra Section B to report the yearly non-federal matching fund budget of the grant. *This form is an outlier and will be added to the “Budget Narrative Attachment” section on Grants.gov, as described in Section IV. C. 2.*

d) 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.

e) 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.

f) 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 students must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on **Wednesday, January 25, 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 NMFS-SG Fellowship Program Manager as listed in Section VII.

Letters of Intent must be submitted by Sea Grant Programs via email to the Competition Manager (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **Wednesday, February 8, 2023**.

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 Time (ET) on **Wednesday, February 24, 2023**. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. ET.) 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 including waived indirect costs as match (15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships").

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applications must come from the eligible Sea Grant program and must be submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov by the application deadline.

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. Quality of project and applicability to program priorities. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship, the project summary should provide evidence of important and innovative research and relate that research to relevant agency priorities (30 points). The point scale is as follows: The project summary is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-10 points); the project summary adequately addresses expectations outlined below (11-20 points); the project summary exceeds expectations outlined below (21-30 points).

- The project description provides a clear rationale for why the work is important and innovative research;
- There is a clear scientific or technical objective and/or hypotheses being tested;
- The discussed methodology and relevance of results are appropriate for the proposed research and time frame;
- The project is relevant to agency priorities.

2. Relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; honors and awards; and interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills (20 Points). For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship the curriculum vitae, career goal statement, and summary of academic training in quantitative methods should demonstrate the experiences of the student as they relate to marine or aquatic related fields. The point scale is as follows: the relevant experience is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-6 points); the relevant experience adequately

addresses expectations outlined below (7-13 points); the relevant experience exceeds expectations outlined below (14-20 points).

- The student demonstrates interpersonal, written, or oral communication skills;
- The student clearly discusses an interest in the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources or quantitative marine ecology;
- The experiences of the student provide them with the foundation for success in the academic space;
- The student has shown interest in working with diverse stakeholders;
- The student's experience demonstrates a commitment to apply scientific expertise to serve society equitably;
- The student has shown interest in working with diverse collaborators, community members and/or interested partners.

3. Academic record as it relates to quantitative coursework and related fields. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship the academic record is evaluated using student transcripts (undergraduate and graduate), the summary of academic training in quantitative methods, and the curriculum vitae (CV) (20 Points). The point scale is as follows: The academic record is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-6 points); the academic record adequately addresses expectations outlined below (7-13 points); the academic record exceeds expectations outlined below (14-20 points).

- The education and experience in the student's area of expertise are appropriate to the career stage;
- The transcripts and academic training demonstrate quantitative coursework;
- The student displays strength in academic performance and competitive course grades;
- Records of publications and/or presentations (academic or non-academic) are appropriate to the career stage, field, and institutional settings.

4. Recommendations and/or endorsements of the student. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics, the expertise of the major professor and proposed NMFS mentor will be taken into account (20 points total).

Academic Advisor Letter(s) (10 Points of 20 points): The point scale is as follows: the advisor letter is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-3 points); the advisor letter adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the advisor letter exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).

- The letter writer(s) demonstrate knowledge of the student and their academic abilities and/or potential;
- The letter writer(s) speak to the leadership potential, confidence, maturity, and self-direction of the student;
- The letter writer(s) provide evidence of the student's involvement in teamwork and collaborative leadership skills;
- The expertise of the major professor(s) will support the student and project (reviewers may use CV to review).

NMFS Mentor Letter(s) (10 Points of 20 points): The point scale is as follows: the NMFS mentor letter is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the NMFS mentor letter adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the NMFS mentor letter exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).

- The letter writer(s) demonstrate knowledge of the student and their academic abilities

and/or potential;

- The letter writer(s) adequately address the relevance of the research to NMFS;
- The letter writer(s) adequately address the broader impacts of the proposal;
- The expertise of the NMFS mentor will support the student and project.

5. Overall application cohesion (10 points total). For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship program, consider all aspects of the application materials (CV, summary of academic training in quantitative methods, project summary, education and career goal statement from the student, letters of recommendation). The point scale is as follows: the application is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations 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 an innovative and diverse perspective to the program;
- The application materials provide a clear picture of what the student would gain from receiving the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship.

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.

National Level Review:

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Applications that are missing required elements listed in [Section IV. B.](#) above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review.

Applications that pass the administrative review process will be individually reviewed and scored by a technical panel of experts in a range of disciplines that are relevant to the applications in accordance with the above criteria ([Section V.A.](#)). Separate panels will be conducted for the population and ecosystem dynamics and the marine resource economics competitions. Panel members will provide individual evaluations of applicants, and their ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the applications. The selecting official will recommend awarding 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 will make final recommendations for awardees to the grants officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

The proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will also be reviewed by the federal program officer to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions. The federal program officer, NEPA staff lead, or grants specialist may contact the program to discuss questions about the environmental effects, merit, or administrative correctness of the 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.

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 as listed in Section I.A. Program Objective, above.
- Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to start August 1, 2023. This is the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF424).

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 in writing, 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://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/home/Login/LoginController.jspf> and is also available at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/external_links.html , as well as 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) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - 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 (FAPIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

(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) 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.

(9) 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.

(10) 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 \(May 2018\)](#).

C. Reporting

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 subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsr.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Financial reports are submitted semi-annually via Grants Online. Performance progress reports should follow program guidelines, must use the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) format, and are submitted annually via Grants Online. Fellows will also be expected to present a review of the progress on their research during the annual NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship Research Symposium.

VII. Agency Contacts

NMFS-SG Sea Grant Fellowship Program Manager
National Sea Grant College Program
Tel: (240) 507-3712
E-mail: oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

Once applications have been recommended for funding, applicants must submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (for each project within the application) through the 90-2 Webform portal (<https://webform.pier.seagrants.noaa.gov/>). This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been awarded. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on Inside Sea Grant (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrants/Implementation>). 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://seagrant.noaa.gov>).

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.

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding

opportunity or that any proposal 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 these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.