



NORTH CAROLINA SEA GRANT

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REQUEST FOR PREPROPOSALS

November 28, 2018

TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads and Faculty
FROM: Susan White, Executive Director, North Carolina Sea Grant
SUBJECT: **Preproposals sought for 2020-2022 North Carolina Sea Grant support**

Program Background

North Carolina Sea Grant (NCSG), one of 33 Sea Grant programs within the National Sea Grant College Program, has initiated the request for proposal (RFP) process for the 2020–2022 Omnibus Funding Cycle, which runs from Feb. 1, 2020, through Jan. 31, 2022. The National Sea Grant College Program is housed within the Office of Ocean and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce.

NCSG supports a multidisciplinary, integrated program of applied research, outreach and education that addresses coastal and marine issues important to the state of North Carolina. NCSG strives to fund applied research within four focus areas: **Healthy Coastal Ecosystems; Resilient Communities and Economies; Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture; and Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development.**

Proposed work must clearly align with one or more of these focus areas, be based within North Carolina, and target issues important to North Carolina’s coastal region. Please refer to the NCSG Strategic Plan for 2018–2021 (go.ncsu.edu/NCSeaGrantPlan2018) to help you ensure your project ideas align with these focus areas.

Successful NCSG projects are based on clear, testable hypotheses. Inventory and monitoring-only projects are not appropriate for this funding. NCSG encourages multicampus submissions, and projects that foster graduate and undergraduate training.

Projects also must include a detailed outreach plan describing how results will be transferred to appropriate stakeholders. Projects that do not clearly identify users of results will not compete well. Applicants are highly encouraged to reach out to NCSG staff to help develop their proposal and outreach ideas. A list of NCSG staff and their expertise is available on the NCSG website (<https://ncseagrant.ncsu.edu/about-us/our-team/>).

Projects supported by NCSG can run for one or two years, and thus can begin on Feb. 1, 2020 or Feb. 1, 2021. Proposals may request up to \$120,000 in federal funds for the two-year funding

period. Matching dollars (nonfederal) are required for this program at a 2:1 rate (\$2 federal to \$1 state). Funds are awarded on a yearly basis and are dependent upon the availability of federal funds.

Application Process

NCSG uses the proposal management system, eSeaGrant, accessible through the following link: (go.ncsu.edu/ncsg) for all proposal submissions. Emailed, faxed, and mailed proposals will not be accepted. NCSG utilizes a two-stage (preproposal and full proposal) RFP process for its Omnibus Funding Cycle. The preproposal application is open to any eligible investigator (see below) wishing to make a submission. Preproposals are designed to allow your ideas to be evaluated, and must be submitted using the supplied preproposal narrative form available within eSeaGrant. Each project participant also must submit a two-page Curriculum Vitae using the form available in eSeaGrant. Submissions not using these institutionally approved forms will not be considered. Letters of Support are not accepted at the preproposal stage. Investigators may only serve as lead Principle Investigator on one submission but may be Co-PI on multiple submissions.

Deadline for preproposals is **5 p.m. on Jan. 14, 2019**. Please do not wait to the last minute to start the process and/or submit your materials. We will not be able to extend the deadline for anyone for any reason. The planned NCSG Omnibus Funding schedule is at the end of the document. Application instructions and schedule for full proposals will be provided later.

Review Criteria

Sea Grant uses a five-point rating system for all proposals: Excellent: top 10% (exhibits outstanding quality/relevance); Very Good 75-90%: (above average quality/relevance); Good: 50-75% (routine/average quality/relevance); Fair: 25-50% (marginal quality/relevance); Poor: bottom 25% (missed the mark, has major deficiencies, not relevant).

Preproposals are reviewed based on three aspects: relevancy/need (Will the project help address a high priority coastal issue?) 50%; approach (Are the proposed methods appropriate to complete the work?) 25%; and transferability (Is it clear the results of the work will be provided to end-users, and do they want them?) 25%. Reviewers of preproposals may include representatives of state and federal agencies, NCSG advisory committee members, NCSG staff, and other coastal resource stakeholders. Based on this review stage, a subset of investigators representing the most highly competitive preproposal submissions will be encouraged to submit full proposals.

Only investigators who submitted preproposals are eligible to submit full proposals. PI teams that are not encouraged to submit full proposals still can do so. However, this discouragement represents the collective opinion of NCSG and our advisors that those proposals have a low probability of being funded.

Full proposals will allow applicants to fully describe their ideas, methods and deliverables. Full proposals will be reviewed by at least three out-of-state peer reviewers as well as NCSG staff. This review stage evaluates full proposals against the following criteria: Relevancy/Need (Will the project help address a high priority coastal issue? Is this work needed?) 30%; Technical/Scientific merit (Are the proposed methods appropriate and scientifically valid to complete the work? Are clear objectives/hypothesis present? Is the project innovative?) 30%; Transferability/Outreach (Is it clear the results of the work will be provided to end-users through an appropriate medium to be shared broadly, and do they want them?) 30%; Qualifications of the applicants (Is the project team qualified to do the work?) 5%; and Budget (Are the requested funds appropriate for completion of the proposed work?) 5%. Reviewers use the same five-point rating system described above.

In addition, a scientific review panel — consisting of researchers and other experts from outside North Carolina with expertise in those disciplines broadly represented by the proposals under consideration — will evaluate the proposals and the peer reviews and then recommend proposals for funding to NCSG leadership. NCSG will submit the final list of projects recommended for funding to the National Sea Grant College Program based on the full review process, panel recommendations, available funding and current program priorities. The National Office reviews and provides final approval on the projects to be funded. Additional full proposal details will be provided in the full proposal RFP to be released after the preproposal stage is complete.

Applicants should be aware that not all highly rated projects will be funded. NCSG does not have enough funding to cover all the outstanding applications that we receive.

Available Funding

NCSG expects to fund 10 two-year research projects in this Omnibus cycle. The maximum federal request per project is \$120,000 over the two-year project period. Matching dollars are required for this program at a 2:1 ratio (\$2 federal to \$1 state). Indirect charges are allowed. All funding is reliant upon NCSG receiving federal funds that currently have not yet been appropriated. As such, no funding can be guaranteed. All funding levels, including the maximum amount per project and the number of projects, are subject to change. Applicants may be asked to revise scopes of work and budgets so that their projects align with available funding levels.

NCSG **will not** conduct a separate graduate student competition as part of this Omnibus Funding Cycle. As such, investigators submitting full proposals should include graduate student support as part of their project budget if such funding is desired.

Eligibility Information

PIs must be affiliated with an academic institution of higher education in North Carolina. Co-PIs and project collaborators can have any affiliation and can be based either within or outside North Carolina. Postdoctoral researchers and federal employees are not eligible to apply as PIs, but can

be project participants. Applicants with poor prior performance in completing progress and final reports on previous NCSG-funded projects may be deemed ineligible even if their current submission receives favorable reviews. 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 from all backgrounds to apply for this competitive research opportunity.

Questions

If you have questions, contact NCSG Deputy Director John Fear at jmfear@ncsu.edu or 919-515-9104. You also may contact me at snwhite3@ncsu.edu or 919-515-2455. This preproposal call is available at <https://ncseagrant.ncsu.edu/core-funding>.

Funding Schedule (Omnibus Cycle 2020-2022) (subject to change)

Nov. 28, 2018	Preproposal call released
Jan. 14, 2019	Preproposals due (relevance reviews obtained)
March 11, 2019	Full proposal encouragements sent
April 29, 2019	Full proposals due (peer reviews obtained)
July 29, 2019	Peer reviews sent to technical panel
Week of Aug. 12, 2019	Technical committee meets to rank full proposals
Sept. 3, 2019	PIs sent funding decision
Oct. 4, 2019	Revised proposals due
Oct. 11, 2019	Final proposals given to the Fiscal Officer for Omnibus submission
Feb. 1, 2020	New projects start