ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL 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 2013 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2013-2003219

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Applicants must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on February 17, 2012 to eligible Sea Grant Programs and Projects (which include all State Sea Grant Programs, the Guam Sea Grant Project, and the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Project). Contact your state Sea Grant Program or Project (see IV.A. of the Federal Funding Opportunity for program contact information) for application information.

Selected applications from the sponsoring Sea Grant Program or Project must be received and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on March 30, 2012.

Funding Opportunity Description: This notice announces that applications may be submitted for the National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program). Sea Grant anticipates funding not less than 30 selected applicants, of which those assigned to the Legislative branch may be limited to 10. Each award will be funded at a total of $52,500 in federal funding.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

In 1979, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Sea Grant College Program, in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities and legislative mandate of the Sea Grant Act 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, initiated the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program. The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program meets NOAA's Mission goal of "Protect, Restore and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources Through Ecosystem-Based Management."

B. Program Priorities

N/A

C. Program Authority

33 USC 1123(c) 4(F) and 33 USC 1127 (b)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Depending on FY2013 Congressional appropriations, the quality of proposals, and potential host office participation, Sea Grant anticipates funding not less than 30 selected applicants, of which those assigned to the Legislative branch may be limited to 10. Each award will be funded at a total of $52,500 in federal funding.

Awards are for one year (2/1/2013-1/31/2014) and cannot be renewed.

B. Project/Award Period

Awards are anticipated to start on February 1, 2013 and run for one year (12 months) and cannot be renewed.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument will be in the form of a cooperative agreement to each individual Sea Grant Program or Project that will support a selected Fellow. The Sea Grant Program or Project receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement on behalf of each fellow selected from their program. The award will be a

cooperative agreement because of substantial involvement by the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager in mentoring and hosting successful applicants.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant is any student, regardless of citizenship, who, on February 17, 2012, is enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program, that have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The graduate degree needs to be awarded through a United States accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. Territories.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

This is a onetime fellowship opportunity. Applicants that have participated in the fellowship in past years will not be eligible to submit an application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants from states served by a State Sea Grant Program, the Guam Sea Grant Project, or the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Project must request application materials and logistical instructions from that program or project. The list of Sea Grant Programs and Projects and contact information may be found at: http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html

Applicants from other states or territories must contact the Agency Contact listed in section VII to obtain application materials, logistical instructions, and a written referral to a Sea Grant Program or Project. This referral must be included in the application package.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to follow these requirements will result in applications being rejected without review.

Required Elements - An application package must include:

(1) Two signed letters of recommendation, including one from the student's major professor; if no major professor exists, a faculty person academically knowing the applicant best may be substituted.

(2) A personal education and career goal statement emphasizing the applicant's abilities and the applicant's expectations from the fellowship experience in the way of career development (1000 words or less). Placement preference in the Legislative or Executive Branches of the Government may be stated; this preference will be honored to the extent possible.

(3) Personal and academic curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages).

(4) Copy of all official undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.

(5) Listing of classes and/or plans for spring 2012, summer 2012 and fall 2012 (not to exceed one page).

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

All applicants will be evaluated solely on their application package according to the criteria listed in Section V. Therefore, letters of endorsement from members of Congress, friends, or relatives will not be accepted.

Applicants are not required to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire in their applications.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Eligible applicants must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time February 17, 2012 to a state Sea Grant program. Applicants from states served by State Sea Grant Programs, the Guam Sea Grant Project, and the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Project must submit to that program or project. Other applicants must submit their applications to the State Sea Grant Program or Project to which they were referred to by the contact listed in section VII.

Selected applications from the sponsoring Sea Grant Program or Project are to be received and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline of 5:00 p.m. EDT on March 30, 2012. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission time line. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. For eligible Sea Grant Program or

Project applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy applications will only be accepted if a Sea Grant Program or Project can justify in writing that internet access is not available to them at the time of submission. Hard copy applications need to be received at the National Sea Grant Office no later than the deadline of 5:00 p.m. EDT on March 30, 2012. Hard copy applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received to establish timeliness.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

The Sea Grant Program or Project receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement of $52,500 per student on behalf of each fellow selected from their program. Of this amount, the eligible Sea Grant Program or Project provides $41,500 to each Fellow for stipend and living expenses (per diem). Of the total cooperative agreement amount, the Sea Grant Program or Project provides $9,000 to cover mandatory health insurance for the fellow and moving expenses. Any remaining funds of the $9,000 shall be used for the fellow during the fellowship year, first to satisfy academic degree-related activities, and second for fellowship-related activities. Finally, up to $2,000 from the total $52,500 can be used to cover placement week costs. Indirect costs are not allowable from the federal funds either for the fellowships or for any costs associated with the fellowships, including the $2,000 budgeted for placement week (see 15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships"). During the fellowship, the host may provide supplemental funds for work-related travel by the fellow.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Prior contacts/arrangements made with possible host offices before the start of the placement week will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process.

Application information may be obtained directly from Grants.gov. It may also be obtained from the eligible Sea Grant Program or Project Directors. The addresses of the state Sea Grant Program or Project Directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web (http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html).

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

At the state review, the evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

(1) Recommendations and/or endorsements of student (15 percent total): Endorsement/content of the letter from the applicant's major professor, and the second letter of recommendation.

(2) Academic record and statement of career goals and objectives of student (45 percent total): Quality of the applicant's personal education and career goal statement (30 percent); Strength of academic performance (15 percent).

(3) Additional relevant experience (40 percent total) related to: diversity of education, extra-curricular activities, honors and awards, and interpersonal, written, and oral communications skills. For the Knauss Sea Grant Fellowship Program, relevant experience would be in Marine or aquatic-related fields.

At the national review, evaluation criteria are identical to that at the state level, except that in criteria (1), the letter of endorsement from the sponsoring State Sea Grant Program or Project Director will also be considered.

B. Review and Selection Process

At the state level, a panel composed of three members, all from the eligible Sea Grant Program or Project, will individually discuss each application based on the evaluation criteria listed in section V.A. Following this discussion, an individual score will be provided by each panel member. Once all applications have been discussed and scored, an average score will be computed for each application. The top scoring applicants will then be submitted by the eligible Sea Grant Program or Project to the National Sea Grant College Program for the national review along with a signed letter of endorsement from the state Sea Grant Program or Project Director. Each eligible Sea Grant Program or Project may select and forward to the National Sea Grant College Program no more than six (6) applications based on the evaluation criteria.

For the national review, a review panel will be assembled to select the fellowship finalists. The panel will include representation from the Sea Grant Association, the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, and the current class of Fellows. Each panel member is assigned applications to review before the panel meeting. During the panel meeting, panel members will individually discuss each application based on the

evaluation criteria listed in section V.A., as well as the signed letter of endorsement from the sponsoring state Sea Grant Program or Project Director. Following this discussion, an individual score for each evaluation criteria will be provided by each panel member. Once all applications have been discussed and scored, an average score will be computed for each application by the Sea Grant Knauss Program Manager or designee. In general, the applicants will be selected based on the average score; however, the selecting official may select lower scored applicants based on the selection factors below. The selected applicants will then be placed into either the legislative or executive group by the selecting official based upon the applicant's stated preference, the application materials submitted, and the individual comments of the panel members.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will award in order of average score unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the following selection factors:

1. Balance/Distribution of funds:

   a. Across academic disciplines

   b. By types of institutions

   c. Geographically

2. Availability of funds

3. Program-specific objectives

4. Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification to the eligible Sea Grant Programs or Projects will be completed by June 1, 2012. Funds are expected to be awarded by approximately February 1, 2013, the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The National Sea Grant College Program will notify, via e-mail, unsuccessful applicants by informing the eligible Sea Grant Program or Project through which the application was submitted. This email will contain a written summary of the review panel comments. The eligible Sea Grant Program or Project will, in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the National Sea Grant College Program. The applications that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed one year after submission date.

The National Sea Grant College Program will inform successful applicants that their application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division by informing, via email, the eligible Sea Grant Program or Project through which successful applications were submitted. This email will contain a written summary of the review panel comments. The eligible Sea Grant Program or Project will, in turn, formally notify each successful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the National Sea Grant College Program. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the Authorizing Official electronically via Grants Online.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl, http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). You may obtain a copy of these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html

The National Environmental Policy Act: As defined in Sections 5.05 and

Administrative or Programmatic Functions of NAO 216-6, 6.03.c.3, this is a fellowship project for which there are no cumulative effects. Thus, it has been categorically excluded from the need to prepare an Environmental Assessment.

Limitation of Liability: 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.

C. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and performance reports (summary of accomplishments and activities) are to be submitted to the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager. Financial reports are semi-annual and performance reports are annual. Reports may be required to be submitted either electronically or in hard copy.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

Contact Chelsea Lowes, Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Room 11876, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Tel: (301) 734-1085.

VIII. Other Information

N/A