

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Table of Contents

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY.....	1
Executive Summary	1
Full Text of Announcement	3
I. Funding Opportunity Description.....	3
II. Award Information	4
III. Eligibility Information.....	4
IV. Application and Submission Information	5
V. Application Review Information.....	11
VI. Award Administration Information.....	13
VII. Agency Contacts.....	16
VIII. Other Information	16

Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

OAR National Sea Grant College Program (SG)

Funding Opportunity Title

Sea Grant Programs Only - FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-OAR-SG-2025-29573

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.417

Dates

Full proposal applications are due March 26, 2025. Period of Performance: Projects **must** have a start date no earlier than September 1, 2025 and an end date of no later than August 31, 2026.

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.

Subject to the availability of funding, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that approximately \$500,000 will be available to Sea Grant Programs to provide opportunities for researchers (faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral individuals), Sea Grant extension personnel, and aquaculture community members, or a mixture of participants, to enhance knowledge of aquaculture technologies, production practices and systems, businesses, or other associated topics pertinent to the species or species group of interest to participants. The goal of this opportunity is that participants will utilize the knowledge and expertise gained through their travel experiences in their approach to improve aquaculture research, extension, or aquaculture production, or business activities that will benefit the U.S. coastal, marine, and Great Lakes aquaculture communities. Awards will be made for no more than \$75,000 in federal funds per project for a duration of up to one year. Available funding can be used to support travel costs, salary, and costs associated with outreach activities following travel. Travel must be focused on visiting aquaculture sites or facilities, either public or private. Funding for research activities is not permitted through this announcement. Successful applications will: identify, justify, and describe the need or needs to be addressed regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, production, or business activities, describe and document the proposed plan regarding how the proposed travel activities will address the identified need or needs, describe how the proposed activities will enhance aquaculture-related activities of project participants, and describe how the proposed activities will benefit the U.S. aquaculture community. Please note that it is envisioned that this funding opportunity, with potential variation in total funding available, will be reinstated annually, contingent on available funding. These investments are consistent with Sea Grant's focus area of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture (SFA) and the Sea Grant Network's 10-year Aquaculture Vision, and support NOAA and Department of Commerce aquaculture goals.

The following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity: Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs. For the remainder of this document, these entities are collectively referred to as "Sea Grant Programs". A Sea Grant Program may submit more than one application. Programs are encouraged to partner with other Sea Grant Programs and/or other entities such as individuals, State and Tribal Agencies/Organizations, HBCUs/MSIs, NGOs, aquaculture industry members and associations, universities, and colleges (including community colleges). Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use, nor can the value of such assets be used as match. International travel is permitted, however international travel must conform to guidelines specified by the Fly America Act.

Applicants **must** complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov), [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov), and [eRA Commons](https://eracommons.gov). All registrations **must** be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions. NOAA has created a guide to aid applicants format application packages to eRA, linked [here](#). Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicants **must** first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations **must** be in place by time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2025-29573.

Please note that a submission checklist to assist applicants in ensuring that they address components and elements of the NOFO is provided on the final page of this document.

Full Text of Announcement

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 U.S. has an opportunity to sustainably increase aquaculture production in marine systems (ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes) while increasing the economic resilience and nutritional security of communities across the country. Farming of finfish, shellfish, sea vegetables/algae, and other aquaculture provides great potential in the U.S. for increasing the supply of ocean and Great Lakes-sourced products while supporting and growing rural and coastal communities and economies. This opportunity has been developed as a means to expose applicants to aquaculture sites domestically or abroad to enhance the knowledge and experience of participants regarding aquaculture methods and technologies.

This competition ("FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses," NOFO number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2025-29573) focuses on projects that support opportunities for researchers (faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral individuals), Sea Grant extension personnel, and aquaculture community members, or a mixture of participants, to enhance knowledge of aquaculture technologies, production practices and systems, businesses, or other associated topics pertinent to the species or species group of interest to participants.

Principal investigators and/or project team members of proposals selected for funding will be required to participate in a National Sea Grant Aquaculture Symposium to be held at a future aquaculture meeting venue to share project results.

B. Program Priorities

In FY 2023, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) established the Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses competition to support travel by various members of U.S. coastal, marine, and Great Lakes aquaculture communities (e.g. researchers, extension personnel, aquaculture industry members, etc.) to aquaculture related sites and facilities domestically and abroad. As envisioned, this competition will enhance the knowledge and experience of participants regarding aquaculture technologies, practices, and/or business activities.

This competition is focused on funding projects that will support travel for one or more individuals to domestic or international aquaculture facilities or sites to facilitate enhancing the knowledge exchange and expertise of coastal, Great Lakes, or marine-focused aquaculture. Activities should enhance the knowledge of participants to aquaculture technologies, production practices and systems, businesses, or other associated topics pertinent to the species or species group of interest to participants. The goal of this opportunity is that participants will utilize the knowledge and expertise gained through travel experiences in their approach to improve aquaculture research, extension, or aquaculture production activities that will benefit the U.S. aquaculture industry.

Successful proposals will:

- Identify, justify, and describe the need or needs to be addressed regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, or production and/or business activities
- Describe and document the proposed plan regarding how the proposed activities will address the identified need or needs

- Describe how the proposed activities will enhance aquaculture-related activities of project participants
- Describe how the proposed activities will benefit U.S. aquaculture and how the proposed activities will benefit the U.S. coastal, marine, and Great Lakes aquaculture communities and associated stakeholders
- Demonstrate a plan to extend the improved approach (techniques, methods, practices, operations) to benefit the U.S. aquaculture community
- Document cooperation/participation from travel host(s)

Engagement with, and support of faculty and students, through partnerships with HBCUs, MSIs, and other underserved institutions and entities, including aquaculture industry members, is encouraged.

The above criteria should lead to the selection of proposals that: 1) enhance the knowledge and expertise of participants with respect to aquaculture methods and technologies; 2) demonstrate that the activities proposed will meaningfully benefit the U.S. aquaculture community and associated stakeholders; and 3) demonstrate a plan to ensure that results of the project are disseminated to the U.S. aquaculture community, as well as the general public.

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 to the FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses competition. The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that approximately \$500,000 in FY2025 federal funds will be available in order to support projects that address the program priorities of this competition. Each award will be no greater than \$75,000.

Applications require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects.

Available funding can be used to support travel costs, salary, and costs associated with outreach activities following travel. Activities must be focused on visiting aquaculture sites or facilities, either public or private. Funding for research activities is not permitted through this announcement. 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

Projects **must** have a start date no earlier than September 1, 2025 and an end date no later than August 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 strategic engagement with the National Sea Grant Aquaculture Team, support from National Sea Grant communication efforts and requires that award recipients follow reporting requirements and participate in a future Sea Grant Aquaculture Research Symposium.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

he following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity: Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs. For the remainder of this document, these entities are collectively referred to as “Sea Grant Programs”. Programs are encouraged to partner with other Sea Grant Programs and/or other entities such as individuals, State and Tribal Agencies/Organizations, MSIs, NGOs, aquaculture industry members and associations, high schools, universities, and colleges, including community colleges. Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use, nor can the value of such assets be used as match.

To be eligible to apply or receive an award, applicants **must** complete and maintain three registrations; [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), and [eRA Commons](https://www.eRA Commons). For each, the complete registration process can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible and well before the proposal due date. For more information on how to meet these registration and application submission requirements without errors, we advise all to carefully review relevant Applicant and Grantee Training modules:

<https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>.

Additionally, we advise that all carefully read ‘Additional Application Package Forms’ within the ‘Full Proposal Required Elements’ section below.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 50 percent 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. If you believe your application may qualify for a waiver, please contact the National Sea Grant Office before submission to discuss it. **The cumulative match at the end of each year of the grant must not fall below 50 percent of the cumulative federal request up to that point.** In-kind contributions 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-2025-29573. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of the 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 applicant(s) **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.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This proposal package will be using a different set of forms than Sea Grant programs have completed in the past. Instead of the “SF424 NOAA Standard Non-Construction Application Package” of forms, this application will include the “SF424 NOAA Research & Related (R&R) Forms Package.” **While many of the forms may be familiar, please pay special attention to the headings and instructions in this section.**

NOAA has created a guide to aid applicants format application packages to eRA: Tips and Tricks for Successful eRA Submissions, linked [here](#). Recent applicants have encountered rejected applications for formatting issues, especially:

- All attachments **must** be in PDF form.
- Do not use “bundling” or “portfolio” features to combine PDFs into a single document. Everything **must** be visible in the PDF.
- Descriptive filenames may only be 50 characters or less (including spaces).
- Keep attachment file size to 100 MB or less.
- eRA won’t accept any pages larger than the U.S. standard letter paper size (8.5” x 11”).

We **strongly** recommend that applicants attempt to submit their full proposals at least a few days prior to the due date in case these or other issues impact your submission, as they are not reasons we can extend the deadline. If you have issues during the submission process, please contact the [eRA Service Desk](#).

Required Elements:

Applications **must** include the following elements. 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.

Full Proposal Required Elements

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

1. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)

This form **must** be completed and include a profile for the Principal Investigator and any co-PI(s). CVs and RELEVANT Current and Pending Support for each person’s profile will also be attached to this form. The biosketch/CV for Senior/Key Persons listed should not exceed five pages. The first listed PD/PI on the application **must** include their eRA Commons ID in the “Credential, e.g., agency login” field of form. Failure to register in eRA Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application. eRA Commons registration can take 2-3 weeks to be approved, so it is encouraged to start the registration process as soon as possible. NOAA is not involved with eRA registration.

Additional personnel included on the form do not need to include this information, however eRA will create a warning recommending those personnel also have valid eRA Commons IDs. Again - it is not required that those additional personnel include valid eRA Commons IDs regardless of the warnings created by the eRA system.

2. Research and Related Budget Form

The Research and Related Budget is a form that **must** be completed covering the entire award by each yearly budget period following the instructions from Grants.gov (e.g., if an award is two years, there needs to be a Budget Period 1 and Budget Period 2 filled out). At the end of the Research and Related Budget form, “Section L” provides space for one attachment titled, “Budget Justification.” The budget narrative for the project **must** be attached there. The budget narrative should explain the budget items by object class category and year (for both federal and non-federal/match) in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested.

For the budget narrative, you may reference the budget narrative guidance found at: [NOAA Grants Management Division's Budget Narrative Guidance](#).

Dollar amounts in this form and narrative **must** be in whole dollars. Please ensure the numbers in the forms and narrative match.

IMPORTANT: Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the federal funding request must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted.

3. Research & Related Other Project Information Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)

This form **must** be completed for the application, and should also be used to attach the Project Abstract Summary Form, the Project Narrative, Bibliography & References Cited (if applicable), and any other relevant forms or information as applicable. See form-specific instructions available on Grants.gov for additional instructions as needed.

a. Project Summary/Abstract Attachment

This attachment should contain the Project Abstract. Using 4,000 characters or less, the Project Abstract should provide an overview of the application. Ensure the Project Abstract succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. It should be a self-contained description of the application and should contain a general statement of objectives and methods to be employed. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a technically literate lay reader. Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive or proprietary/confidential information. This project abstract information (as submitted) will be made available on public websites and/or databases including USAspending.gov.

Project Abstract Elements

Use the following format:

- Purpose
- Activities to be performed
- Expected Outcomes
- Intended Beneficiaries
- Subrecipient Activities

Please note that grant processors should enter information using the above format and any deviation is **STRONGLY** discouraged.

- Keep the project abstract short. In most cases, each element above should be 2-3 sentences to a paragraph in length.
- DO NOT repeat the Proposal Title. The Proposal Title is always presented with the Project Description, so including it in the abstract is not necessary.
- Include a high quality description that includes specificity regarding the purpose of the project. Characteristics of strong abstracts include a plain language description of the purpose for the project (which may include specific performance goals, indicators, milestones, or expected outcomes of the project), activities to be performed, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiary or recipient.
- Keep it simple. Do not use abbreviations, acronyms, technical terminology, or agency-specific terms. The intended audience is Congress and the general public, not specific interested parties and/or federal employees.

b. Project Narrative Attachment

The project proposal narrative should clearly lay out the topical nature of the proposal, how it responds to the priorities of the competition, and how it will lay the foundation for future work. Applicants should budget travel to attend and participate in a National Sea Grant Aquaculture Symposium to be held at a future aquaculture meeting venue to share results of work conducted. Dates and location for the symposium will be announced annually by the National Sea Grant Office.

The project proposal narrative should be not more than five (5) pages using 12-pt font with 1" margins, inclusive of footnotes, tables, figures, and appendices. Reviewers will not be responsible for reviewing more than five pages of the project proposal narrative. Please note that the five page limit excludes the cover page, letters of support, and bibliography attachment. Applicants need not fill the entire five page maximum for the project proposal narrative.

Project Narrative Elements (application **must** include):

1. Cover page (not included in 5-page limit) including:

- Proposal title
- Listing of all project investigators with email addresses
- Listing of collaborators/partners and proposed travel host(s)
- Estimated budget by year of federal funds requested with matching funds

2. Project background

- Explain/describe the need or needs to be addressed by project activities regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, production, or business activities

3. Project objectives/details

- List the project objectives and describe in detail the proposed travel activities (site(s) and contact(s) to be visited) and how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background
- **Applicants must include Letters of Support from the travel host(s) (letters do not contribute to the page limit)**
- Include a timeline chart or bulleted list illustrating project activities and milestones
- Explain how the project leverages the expertise of project partners/travel hosts

4. Anticipated outcomes and deliverables including:

- A clear description of project outcomes and deliverables
- A description of how the proposed travel will be of benefit to participants as well as the U.S. aquaculture community.

5. Outreach and education plan

- Provide a description of outreach activities to ensure that project activities and project results are disseminated to the aquaculture community and other appropriate stakeholders and the general public, including underserved groups and communities
- Describe how Sea Grant extension personnel will be involved in the outreach and education plan

6. Institutional Review Board (IRB) - if applicable

- Applicants submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects should state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution or appropriate entity and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.

7. Diversity statement

- NSGO recognizes it has a particular and unique opportunity to support NOAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion by taking an intentional step that encourages applicants to consider diversity and inclusion as part of their scientific projects. This action has the potential to make an impact on not only the diversity and inclusion in science at NOAA, but also in the equity of services provided by NOAA. In this section, describe how the proposed activity incorporates the input of underrepresented groups and how these groups benefit from its outcomes (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identities, sexual orientation, disability, geography, etc.). Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by NSGO related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Resources for Applicants & Reviewers section found here: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/funding/>.

8. Letters of support confirming partnerships as listed in the proposal (does not count against the page limit). **Note that letters of support from the travel host(s) are required.**

9. Other letters of support (as relevant; if included, they do not count against the page limit)

c. *Bibliography & References Cited Attachment (if applicable)*

If applicable, provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Project Narrative. Each reference should include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Include only bibliographic citations. Applicants should be especially careful to follow scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the application.

d. *Other Required Attachments*

NEPA Questionnaire

This competition is not seeking proposals that will have an environmental impact. Therefore, a NEPA Questionnaire is not required as part of the proposal.

4. Additional Application Package Forms

In addition to the forms required above, standard federal forms and assurances are **required** and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov. These include:

a. *SF-424 R&R Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0001)*

This form, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," **must** identify the entire funding period, as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and any non-federal matching fund amount. 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. Total federal and non-federal amounts listed in the SF-424 R&R, the Cumulative Budget of the Research and Related Budget form, and budget narrative **must be the same**. The proposed start date **must** be the first day of a month and the proposed end date **must** be on the last day of a month.

Applicants will be required to enter their organization's Congressional District in the SF424 R&R form. For tips on finding and entering your Congressional District correctly, please review the information found here: <https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/2017/06/21/how-to-find-your-congressional-district-for-the-sf-424-form/>

b. *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.

c. *CD-511 (Grants.gov, US DOC)*

The form, titled "Certification Regarding Lobbying," **must** be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

d. *SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046) - optional form, include if appropriate*

This form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," is an optional form and should be included if appropriate. If included, it **must** be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

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

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 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

Applications **must** be submitted to Grants.gov and accepted by eRA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 26, 2025.

Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov and eRA may take up to two business days after submission. Eligible Sea Grant programs should consider this process in developing their submission timeline. For eligible applications submitted through Grants.gov and eRA, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. NOAA has created a guide to aid applicants format application packages to eRA: [Tips and Tricks for Successful eRA Submissions](#), linked [here](#).

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

The Sea Grant Act at 33 USC 1124(d)(2) states:

"No payment under any grant or contract under this section may be applied to:

(A) the purchase or rental of any land; or

(B) the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel; except that payment under any such grant or contract may be applied to the short-term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings which are in direct support of any Sea Grant Program or project and may, if approved by the Secretary, be applied to the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures, or to the rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of activities under any Sea Grant Program or project."

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants **must** complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include [SAM.gov](#), [Grants.gov](#), and [eRA Commons](#). All registrations **must** be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicants **must** first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Applicants can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations **must** be in place by time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

The first PD/PI listed on the application **must** include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. Failure to register in the Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

After submission to Grants.gov, the PI listed on the application will receive an email notification from the eRA email address era-notify@mail.nih.gov. This email will either confirm a successful submission to eRA or list errors and warnings associated with the application. Errors **must** be addressed, the application resubmitted via Grants.gov, and an email received by the listed PI indicating a successful submission to eRA for an application to be successfully received by NOAA.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 25
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses competition this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the need or needs to be addressed regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, production, or business activities • A description of how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background 	
2. Project details	Maximum Points: 25
<p>This criterion assesses whether the approach is sound and/or innovative, if proposed activities are appropriate and address a defined need or needs, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses competition this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the goals and objectives of the proposal are clearly described, proposed travel activities (site(s) and host(s) to be visited) are presented in detail, and a description of how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background • A timeline chart or bulleted list illustrating project activities and milestones 	
3. Outcomes and deliverables, including outreach and education plan	Maximum Points: 25
<p>This criterion assesses whether the project provides a clear description of anticipated outcomes and deliverables that will result from the project, and a description of the outreach and education plan. For the FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses competition this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of how the project will be of benefit to participants, as well as, the U.S. aquaculture community • A description of outreach activities regarding how project activities and project results are disseminated to the aquaculture community and other appropriate stakeholders and the general public, including underserved groups and communities • A description of how Sea Grant extension personnel will be involved in the outreach and education plan 	
4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 15
<p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the proposed project activities, needs, and time frame.</p>	
5. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 10

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant(s) possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities (if applicable), and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

Evaluation Criteria

Review and Selection Process

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. NOAA in its sole discretion may continue review of applications with minor deficiencies that may be easily rectified or cured.

Applications that pass the administrative review will be reviewed by subject matter experts. Each proposal will receive at least three written reviews assessing its merits with regard to the evaluation criteria. Upon completion of written reviews, reviewer scores will be averaged to produce a rank order of proposals. 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 in Section V.C. The selecting official shall make final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award. Applicants should be aware that, based on past competitions, not all highly rated projects may be able to be funded.

The program manager, NEPA staff lead, or grants specialist may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the merit or administrative correctness of the application and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

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:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 1. Geographically
 2. by type of institution
 3. by type of partners
 4. by research priority
 5. by project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Investigators may be asked to answer questions; and/or modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets (including overall funding level) to address the issues raised by the reviewers, the competition manager, the Selecting Official, or the Grants Officer before an award is made. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

It is anticipated that successful applicants will be notified in May 2025 that the Selecting Official is recommending them for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. Subject to the availability of funds, projects are expected to start no earlier than September 1, 2025. The anticipated start date for awards made under this competition will be dependent on funding availability, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA and environmental compliance analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final selection package has been approved by the NOAA GMD, which is expected in June 2025. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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 applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS. For awards designated on the CD-450 as Research, the Commerce Terms, and the Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions (Research Terms) as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently, at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a specific award condition.

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 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC) TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in eRA at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

BUREAU TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept an award under this solicitation will be bound by bureau-specific standard terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. For NOAA awards only, the Administrative Standard Award Conditions for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Financial Assistance Awards U.S. Department of Commerce are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance>

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH. For research projects involving Human Subjects an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or an exemption determination will be required in accordance with DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Section G.05.i "Research Involving Human Subjects" found at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. 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.

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.

NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY. NOAA requires organizations receiving federal assistance to report findings of sexual harassment, or any other kind of harassment, regarding a Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, or any other key personnel in the award.

NOAA expects all financial assistance recipients to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment free workplaces wherever NOAA grant or cooperative agreement work is conducted, including notification pathways for all personnel, including students, on the awards. This expectation includes activities at all on- and offsite facilities and during conferences and workshops. All such settings should have accessible and evident means for reporting violations and recipients should exercise due diligence with timely investigations of allegations and corrective actions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>.

SCIENCE INTEGRITY. 1. Maintaining Integrity. The non-Federal entity shall maintain the scientific integrity of research performed pursuant to this grant or financial assistance award including the prevention, detection, and remediation of any allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, and the conduct of inquiries, investigations, and adjudications of allegations of violations of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. All the requirements of this provision flow down to subrecipients. 2. Peer Review. The peer review of the results of scientific activities under a NOAA grant, financial assistance award or cooperative agreement shall be accomplished to ensure consistency with NOAA standards on quality, relevance, scientific integrity, reproducibility, transparency, and performance. NOAA will ensure that peer review of "influential scientific information" or "highly influential scientific assessments" is conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review and NOAA policies on peer review, such as the Information Quality Guidelines. 3. In performing or presenting the results of scientific activities under the NOAA grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement and in responding to allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, the non-Federal entity and all subrecipients shall comply with the provisions herein and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 202-735D, Scientific Integrity, and its Procedural Handbook, including any amendments thereto. That Order can be found at <http://nrc.noaa.gov/ScientificIntegrityCommons.aspx>. 4. Primary Responsibility. The non-Federal entity shall have the primary responsibility to prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. Unless otherwise instructed by the grants officer, the non-Federal entity shall promptly conduct an initial inquiry into any allegation of such misconduct and may rely on its internal policies and procedures, as appropriate, to do so. 5. By executing this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement the non-Federal entity provides its assurance that it has established an administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigating, and reporting allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct; and that it will comply with its own administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigation, and reporting of such misconduct. 6. The non-Federal entity shall insert this provision in all subawards at all tiers under this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement.

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 about any information concerning organizational performance listed in the Responsibility/Qualification section of SAM.gov for consideration by the awarding agency.

REVIEWS AND EVALUATION. 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 the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with §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.

Indirect Cost Rate - If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 15% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) (as allowable under revisions to 2 C.F.R. §200.414 that will be in effect October 2024). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the MTDC base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov.

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted semi-annually. Reports are submitted electronically through eRA.

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 FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

The National Sea Grant Office mailing address is:

NOAA Sea Grant
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

For questions about this competition, contact Chuck Weirich or Mark Rath, National Sea Grant Office's aquaculture managers (oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov) and put the name of the competition in the subject line. Please only use this email address regarding submission of questions pertaining to this competition.

VIII. Other Information

Demographics Information

In accordance with OMB SPD 15, NOAA requests applicant(s) complete this [online form](#) for the lead PI/Applicant. Submission of the requested information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award unless otherwise noted by the opportunity. Any individual not wishing to submit some or all the information should check the box provided for this purpose or skip the question. Upon receipt of the application, this form will be separated from the application. **This form will not be duplicated, and it will not be a part of the review process. Data will be confidential.**

Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form

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](#), or as a PDF via e-mail to oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov. This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been recommended for award. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on the [Sea Grant Implementation](#) page, under the PIER information tab. Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the [National Sea Grant College Program public website](#).

National Sea Grant Planning Implementation and Evaluation Reporting (PIER)

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.

Section 508 Compliance

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.

Submission Checklist

FY2025 Enhancing Knowledge of Aquaculture Technologies, Practices, and Businesses - Sea Grant Programs Only

- Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form completed (see Section IV. B1)
- Research and Related Budget Form completed, ensuring that budgets are included for each year of funding requested, along with a budget justification/narrative that includes each year (see Section IV. B2)
- Funding request (federal funds) is no more than \$75,000
- Overall matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the federal funding request included
- Project period is one year - projects **must** have a start date of September 1, 2025 and an end date of no later than August 31, 2026.
- Research & Related Other Project Information Form completed - including project abstract summary with all components addressed in the correct format (see Section IV. B3)
- Full proposal project narrative includes all elements as specified in Section IV. B3.b of the NOFO
- SF-424 R&R Form completed
- SF-424B Assurances Form completed
- CD-511 Form completed
- SF-LLL Form optional form, include if appropriate
- Full proposal submitted to grants.gov and accepted by eRA by 11:59 p.m., ET, March 26, 2025. A guide to best practices for successfully submitting applications to eRA is located [here](#).