



2020-2022 Biennial Request for Proposals

<http://www.seagrants.umaine.edu/funding>

**Deadline for Preliminary Proposals:
Monday, March 4, 2019, 4:30 p.m. EST**

Late applications will not be considered.

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A. Introduction

The Maine Sea Grant College Program invites preliminary proposals for research projects to be funded in the period February 2020 through January 2022. Maine Sea Grant is a state-federal partnership based at the University of Maine and sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the State of Maine. Maine Sea Grant is administered by the University of Maine, but the research competition is open to faculty and staff at any public or private research or higher education institution in the state. Operating in partnership with NOAA's National Sea Grant Office, the mission of Maine Sea Grant is to play a leadership role in marine science and education in Maine and to promote their use for the sustainable development, management, and stewardship of marine and coastal resources. Through our biennial request for proposals, we strive to sponsor a diverse research portfolio that links the scientific capacity of Maine with the needs of coastal stakeholders.

Maine Sea Grant seeks to foster the highest quality marine research with a strong likelihood of societal impact in Maine, so only the most creative and rigorously conceived proposals will receive consideration. We seek to support projects developed through meaningful engagement with coastal or marine stakeholders and focused on research questions that are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities. We accept proposals aligned with any part of our current strategic plan. We also strongly encourage projects that will advance Maine's capacity for adaptive coastal resource management and public policy in response to climate-driven ecosystem change.

Maine Sea Grant's funding programs are highly competitive, with each proposal receiving preliminary in-state stakeholder review, extensive peer review, and final review conducted by an ad-hoc external peer-review panel. Maine Sea Grant routinely receives numerous excellent proposals and available funds are never sufficient to support all of them.

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, and inclusion by recruiting, retaining and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Maine 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, educational levels, job classifications, veteran status types, and income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this competitive research opportunity.

B. Funding Levels and Duration

Proposed research activities may be one or two years in duration, for the period between February 2020 and January 2022. Assuming no changes in the federal Sea Grant appropriation and the requirements of the non-research components of the Maine Sea Grant program, an estimated **\$600,000** will be available to support research projects over the two-year funding period. Maine Sea Grant will consider funding proposals up to \$150,000. Maine Sea Grant intends to fund as many excellent proposals as is possible within budgetary constraints; **projects with smaller requests and those that show strong leveraging of Sea Grant funding are encouraged.** Due to Maine Sea Grant's limited resources, total two-year requests over \$150,000 in Sea Grant funds (including all direct and indirect costs) will not be considered. Sea Grant funding requires a 50% non-federal match; all preliminary proposals must indicate source and level of available non-federal match. Proposals without sufficient match will not be considered.

C. Maine Sea Grant Strategic Goals & Objectives

Maine Sea Grant requests competitive research proposals that align with the strategic goals (outlined below), integrate across Sea Grant’s functional areas of research, education, and outreach (extension and communications), and display a strong promise for meaningful societal impact and application. Collaborations with industry, state and regional agencies, and other research institutions are encouraged. All proposals must clearly identify how the proposed research applies to one (or more) of the strategic goals and objectives. Investigators are encouraged to explicitly describe how understanding, tools, and data products generated in their projects will lead to measurable progress toward these priorities.

Maine Sea Grants strategic plan for 2018 – 2021 with goals & objectives can be found here: (<http://seagrant.umaine.edu/files/funding/2018-2022-msg-strategic-plan.pdf>)

Maine Sea Grant Strategic Goals for 2018 – 2021

Healthy Coastal Ecosystems	<u>Goal:</u> If we are successful, people will understand the links between healthy ecosystems and resilient communities, and take action to ensure the long-term health of coastal resources
Resilient Communities	<u>Goal:</u> If we are successful, Maine’s coastal communities will draw upon their assets to adapt to, prepare for, address, and recover from environmental, economic, and social/cultural vulnerabilities they have identified and prioritized
Safe & Sustainable Seafood	<u>Goal:</u> If we are successful, Maine’s wild harvest and aquaculture sectors and the communities that depend on them are economically viable and environmentally sustainable
Communities Preparing for a Changing Climate	<u>Goal:</u> If we are successful, communities understand the risks and opportunities that may result from a changing climate, and develop effective strategies that enhance preparedness for and resilience to uncertainty and change in environmental conditions
Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development	<p><u>Goal 1:</u> If we are successful, we will have helped create an environmentally literate public who can use scientific knowledge to identify questions, draw evidence-based conclusions, and make decisions about issues that affect the ecological health, economic vitality, and resilience of Maine’s coastal communities and ocean-related resources</p> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> If we are successful, Maine will have a diverse workforce skilled in disciplines critical to the ecological health, economic vitality, and resilience of Maine’s coastal communities and ocean-related resources</p>

D. Proposal Development and Evaluation Process

The development and review of Sea Grant proposals is a multi-step process

- 1) Preliminary proposals are to be submitted electronically to Maine Sea Grant through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by **4:30 p.m. EST on Monday, March 4, 2019**. For investigators from a University of Maine campus, please note that you will be required to follow submission guidelines from the Office of Research Administration.
- 2) Preliminary proposals are evaluated by an in-state ad-hoc panel of stakeholders (e.g., government, NGOs, businesses). The objective at this stage of review is to identify preliminary proposals that provide the most promise in advancing knowledge in one (or more) of the four identified Sea Grant strategic priorities and the potential for societal impact. The pre-proposal review is primarily focused on the relevance and potential of the project, rather than scientific merit, although obvious flaws in project design will be identified. The pre-proposal stage also offers the opportunity to give applicants advice on how their proposals might be improved. Pre-proposal review criteria include, but are not limited to:
 - Does the proposed work apply in a meaningful way to one (or more) of Maine Sea Grant's strategic objectives?
 - Which stakeholders will benefit from the research, and how will they benefit?
 - Are the anticipated societal impacts credible and do they justify the investment?
 - Does the proposed work relate to, or complement, Maine Sea Grant's ongoing research or extension efforts? (See seagrant.umaine.edu/research for information on previous Maine Sea Grant-funded research projects.)
 - Is the outreach strategy well-conceived and appropriate?

The pre-proposal panel's evaluations are advisory; final decisions on inviting full proposals will be made by the Maine Sea Grant Management Team.

- 3) Applicants who submit the most promising preliminary proposals will be invited to submit full project proposals. Full proposals are to be submitted electronically to Maine Sea Grant through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by **4:30 p.m. EDT on Monday, June 3, 2019**. Full proposal guidelines will be available online after preliminary proposal applicants have been invited to submit full proposals.

Preliminary proposal applicants not invited to submit a full proposal by Maine Sea Grant may still choose to submit a full proposal; however, applicants must have submitted a preliminary proposal to be eligible to submit a full proposal.

- 4) Peer mail reviews of full proposals are obtained from out-of-state U.S. and international experts in the proposed area of research. Each proposal is expected to receive at least three reviews. Applicants suggest potential reviewers, and identify potential conflicts of interest. In general, about half of the reviewers are those suggested by the applicant, although this is not guaranteed. Applicants are provided anonymous copies of the peer reviews.

- 5) An opportunity is provided for the applicant to write rebuttals to the reviewers' comments.
- 6) A technical review panel of out-of-state experts evaluates the proposals, peer reviews, and applicant's rebuttals to provide a summary of the scientific merit and prospects for success.
- 7) Recommendations for funding to the National Sea Grant Office are made by the Maine Sea Grant Management Team based on the evaluations of both the pre- and full-proposal review panels. For example, a proposal considered a high priority by the pre-proposal panel (based on need, relevance, and/or potential impact) would be funded in preference to a lower priority proposal of similar scientific merit. Conversely, a proposal of outstanding scientific merit would be funded in preference to a weak scientific proposal that was ranked higher by the pre-proposal review panel. Final project selection also takes into account programmatic considerations, such as the overall balance of projects and disciplines in our research portfolio, and the diversity of institutions and investigators supported by Maine Sea Grant.
- 8) Final decisions for Maine Sea Grant-funded proposals are subject to approval by the program officer from the National Sea Grant Office who attends the full proposal review panel. Applicants will be informed of final decisions in October 2019.

E. Preliminary Proposal Guidelines

Remember that project review and selection is a two-step process. Preliminary proposals are evaluated primarily on the basis of their relevance to the Maine Sea Grant strategic priorities and potential benefits to stakeholders and citizens. Invited full proposals are evaluated on the basis of scientific merit and qualifications of the applicant.

All components of the preliminary proposal (as described below) must be submitted through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu). Applicants must first create an eSeaGrant account. A short walkthrough tutorial on how to use eSeaGrant can be found at <http://seagrant.umaine.edu/files/funding/2019-eseagrant-instructions.pdf>. For questions please contact Dan Weaver, Maine Sea Grant Research Coordinator, sgresearch@maine.edu. Preliminary proposals must be received by Monday, March 4 by 4:30 p.m. EST.

Preliminary proposals must contain the following elements:

- 1) **List of investigators**
- 2) **List of additional personnel involved in the project**
- 3) **Project abstract**: a brief summary of your project that focuses on the objectives, methodology, and rationale.
- 3) **Proposal narrative** (three-page limit, excluding literature citations, with 12-point Times New Roman font with 1 inch top, bottom, and side margins)
 - a. **Justification and expected impacts**: Describe the question or problem that you propose to address and clearly identify how it applies to one (or more) of Maine Sea Grant's

strategic objectives as described above. It is particularly important to explicitly address the anticipated societal impacts of the research by explaining how the information obtained will be used by a clearly identified group of stakeholders. If the idea originated with a stakeholder then state and explain how your results will impact their needs.

- b. **Scientific approach:** Describe the major goals and objectives of the research, including the questions or hypotheses that will be addressed or tested. Outline the conceptual approaches and methodologies that will be used, and provide a general timeline for the project.
- c. **Available resources:** Briefly summarize the qualifications of the investigator(s) and the institutional capabilities that will be brought to bear on the proposed project.
- d. **Outreach:** Describe the strategies that will be used to communicate the research results to stakeholders. The overall goal of outreach is to effect change by having individuals, groups, or institutions use science-based information when making decisions. Outreach is activity that extends Sea Grant-sponsored and other relevant coastal and marine information to user groups. Presenting results at a scientific meeting, academic seminar, or publishing in peer-reviewed journals are encouraged but are not considered outreach within this context. Applicants are encouraged to review [Maine Sea Grant's public outreach and engagement document](#) and discuss outreach goals and strategies with Gayle Zydlewski, Maine Sea Grant's Director or a member of the [Marine Extension Team](#). If Marine Extension Team members or other Sea Grant staff will participate in the project, you must have their explicit permission to be included in the proposal, and their roles must be specified. **Do not assume their participation.**
- e. **Literature cited:** Provide complete citations for all literature referenced in the proposal narrative.

4) **Budget and justification**

- a. **Budget form:** Complete a budget using the online 90-4 budget form available on eSeaGrant. Prepare a budget for each year of the proposal and an overall summary (if the project is for two years). **A 50% match of federal funds (i.e., one dollar of match for every two dollars of federal money received) is required on all Sea Grant proposals. The first year must contain at least 50% or more of required match. If over 50% match was applied in the first year, then subsequent years must contain enough match to keep the cumulative match at or above 50% of the total amount of federal funding that has been received up to that point.** The budget should include all direct (including fringe benefits) and indirect costs of the research. Applicants should contact the sponsored research department of their home institution to obtain the current rates for fringe benefits and indirect costs.

Because graduate education is a priority for Maine Sea Grant, applicants are encouraged to include support for graduate students in their projects. Minimum graduate student research assistant stipends are \$20,800 for Masters students and \$21,333 for PhD students for 12 months. Please refer to: <http://www.umaine.edu/orsp/quick-links/rates/> for the most up-to-

date information on minimum stipends, health insurance, and tuition rates for graduate students. If graduate student support is included, our expectation is that the research project would form all or part of the graduate student's thesis, and that the student will be supported full-time. Requests for partial graduate student support (e.g., for a six-month stipend) must explain the nature of the student's involvement in the project and indicate how the student will be supported for the remainder of the year.

Applicants must budget for the cost of outreach aspects of their project, such as printing costs, or outreach-related meetings or workshops.

Applicants outside the University of Maine must include University of Maine indirect costs (refer to <http://www.umaine.edu/orsp/quick-links/rates/> for the most up-to-date rates) on the first \$25,000 of their total budget.

b. **Budget justification:** Provide a brief sentence that justifies the major items of the budget.

- 5) **Previous Sea Grant support (if applicable):** All principal investigators who have received Sea Grant support are required to provide a summary for each project funded in the past five years. The report should contain the following elements:
- Project title.
 - Principal investigator(s).
 - Period and amount of award.
 - Summary of major results and conclusions (250-word limit).
 - List of all publications that resulted from the grant, distinguishing between peer-reviewed and other literature.
 - List of students, post-docs, and other professionals supported with degree titles and dates (if appropriate).
 - List of significant outreach accomplishments or impacts on industry or other stakeholders.
- 6) **Current and pending support:** (one-page limit for each investigator). For each PI, list all pending, current, and recent (within three years) outside support. Include project title, amount, source, and period of funding, and the extent of the PI's involvement in each project.
- 7) **CV of principal investigator(s)** (two-page limit for each investigator). Indicate institutional affiliation and key professional details. List up to five publications most relevant to the proposal, along with five additional recent publications.
- 8) **Letters of support (optional):** Provide 2 or 3 letters from stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, tribes, NGOs, industry, etc.) that support your proposed work.

F. Contacts for further information

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the [Research Coordinator](#) to discuss project ideas and proposal development and Lynn Wardwell to discuss budgeting.

Research Coordinator: Daniel Weaver

sgresearch@maine.edu

Tel: 207-581-4880

Fiscal Officer: Lynn Wardwell

wardwell@maine.edu

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G. Request for Proposals Timeline (2019)

Wednesday, January 9: Announce 2020-2022 request for preliminary proposals.

Tuesday, February 5 (9:30 – 11:30 AM): Informational Zoom webinar introducing the RFP and Maine Sea Grant marine extension team.

Monday, March 4: Preliminary proposal submissions due electronically through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by 4:30 p.m. EST.

Thursday, April 11 (tentative): Stakeholder advisory panel reviews preliminary proposals and makes recommendations to Maine Sea Grant Management Team regarding full proposal development.

Wednesday, April 17: Applicants receive recommendations regarding development of full proposals.

Monday, May 20: Full proposal intent to submit form with list of suggested reviewers due to Daniel Weaver via email (daniel.weaver@maine.edu) by 4:30 p.m. EDT

Monday, June 3: Full proposals due electronically through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by 4:30 p.m. EDT.

Monday, June 10: Full proposals mailed to scientific peer reviewers.

Monday, July 22: Full proposal peer reviews due.

Friday, August 2: Peer review blind copies provided to applicants.

Wednesday, August 14: Rebuttal letters due electronically by 4:30 p.m. EDT.

Friday, August 16: Proposals, peer reviews, and rebuttals sent to Technical Advisory Panel and to the National Sea Grant Office.

Tuesday, September 17 (tentative): Technical Advisory Panel reviews proposal packages and makes recommendations to Maine Sea Grant Management Team. Maine Sea Grant Management Team meets to make final decisions on which projects to include in the proposal to the National Sea Grant office for 2020-2021 funding.

Friday, September 20: Selected projects and rationale submitted to the National Sea Grant office for approval.

By mid-October: Applicants informed of decisions.

February 1, 2020: Anticipated 2020-2021 awards begin.

H. Preliminary Proposal Checklist

Note for University of Maine investigators: The Proposal Approval Routing System (PARS) process is not required for preliminary proposals.

- ❑ All proposal elements must be submitted electronically through Maine eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu)
- ❑ Uploaded proposal text documents must be in pdf format with Times New Roman in 12-point font with 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and both sides.
- ❑ The preliminary proposal will include:
 - ❑ List of project investigators
 - ❑ List of additional personnel
 - ❑ Project abstract
 - ❑ Proposal narrative (3-page maximum) and literature citations
 - ❑ Budget for each year of project using budget worksheets in eSeaGrant
 - ❑ Brief budget justifications
 - ❑ Previous Sea Grant support
 - ❑ Current and pending support
 - ❑ CV(s) (2-page limit per investigator in pdf format)
 - ❑ Letters of support (optional)