



# 2026–2028 Request for Proposals

[seagrants.umaine.edu/funding](https://seagrants.umaine.edu/funding)

Deadline for Letters of Intent:  
**February 4, 2025 by 11:59 pm EST**

Submitted through InfoReady online application interface

Deadline for Full\* Proposals:  
**May 15, 2025 by 11:59 pm EST**

\*Note: Full proposals will only be considered if applicants have submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI). Applicants will also be required to submit a Notice of Intent to submit a full proposal due  
**April 14, 2025 by 11:59 pm EST**

*Late applications will not be considered.*

Webinar: **January 7, 2025 12:00 pm EST**



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# Announcement of Maine Sea Grant biennial research funding opportunity

## I. Introduction

Established at the University of Maine in 1980, Maine Sea Grant is one of 34 programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Sea Grant College Program authorized by Congress in 1968. As a federal-state partnership, Maine Sea Grant supports research, education, and extension activities to help identify and address challenges and opportunities for our coastal communities and ecosystems. Maine Sea Grant's mission is to support the responsible use and conservation of coastal resources to sustain diverse, thriving coastal communities and ecosystems. This broad mission requires diverse partnerships and sources of knowledge to navigate the impacts of ecological, economic, and social changes at all scales.

Maine Sea Grant invites proposals for research projects to be funded from 2026–2028. Maine Sea Grant seeks to support projects developed and implemented through meaningful engagement with coastal or marine interests and focused on research questions and approaches responsive to the needs of Maine's communities. Knowledge produced collaboratively between researchers and local interests increases the likelihood that project outputs and outcomes will be more accessible and relevant for the communities the research intends to serve. This competition solicits proposals that address problems and opportunities facing marine and coastal users, managers, and educators using scientific, traditional, or local knowledge approaches.

Investigators throughout the state of Maine are invited to apply for one-to two-year projects that contribute to Maine Sea Grant and state priority information needs and utilize scientific, traditional, or local approaches to advance knowledge in one of four focus areas: **coastal ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture, communities and economies, and environmental literacy and workforce development**. We accept proposals aligned with these four focus areas and the cross-cutting principles in our current [Strategic Plan](#). We also strongly encourage proposals that:

- Engage diverse partners and end users throughout all phases of the project, including proposal development
- Integrate concepts and methods from multiple disciplinary perspectives and engage researchers from both the social and biophysical sciences
- Develop cross-cultural perspectives in research by weaving different ways of knowing (scientific, local, traditional) and engaging diverse experiences and expertise on emerging environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues
- Provide meaningful student training, professional development, and/or mentorship opportunities
- Explicitly link with strategies and actions described in the 2024 Maine Climate Council's Climate Action Plan [Maine Won't Wait](#)

## A. Proposal summary and priorities

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Maine Sea Grant invites proposals for **one- to two-year** research projects from investigators throughout the state of Maine. Collaborations with tribal, state and regional agencies, municipalities, local organizations, industry, and other research and education institutions are encouraged. All proposals must clearly identify how the proposed research applies to one (or more) of the strategic goals and objectives (stated as actions in the Strategic Plan) and cross-cutting principles (also in the Strategic Plan). Maine Sea Grant seeks to foster the highest quality marine research with a strong likelihood of societal impact in Maine. Investigators will be evaluated on how well they explicitly describe how understanding, tools, and data products generated in their projects will lead to measurable progress toward these goals and actions.

Below is a summary of the Maine Sea Grant focus areas for 2024–2027. Program areas are not mutually exclusive, and successful proposals may address more than one. Please refer to the [Strategic Plan](https://seagrants.umaine.edu/resource/strategic-plan-2024-2027) for specific goals and strategic actions: [seagrants.umaine.edu/resource/strategic-plan-2024-2027](https://seagrants.umaine.edu/resource/strategic-plan-2024-2027)

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### **Coastal Ecosystems**

Healthy, connected, and functional ecosystems are the foundation for the future of the people in the Gulf of Maine region. Maine Sea Grant focuses on increasing the shared body of knowledge about Maine’s extensive and varied coastline to address issues and challenges that affect coastal ecosystems and connected inland areas, with climate change centered as a priority issue in all of our ecosystems work. Our research investments in this focus area are as diverse as the ecosystems in the state, with emphasis on applied research that has the potential to address complex challenges. Water quality, species-specific research, and habitat monitoring and restoration, along with efforts to identify and protect ecosystem services are major priorities for our work in this focus area.

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### **Communities and Economies**

Maine’s coastal communities depend on unique assets related to the sea with a diverse cultural heritage, including fisheries and working waterfronts. Maine Sea Grant focuses on increasing the resilience and well-being of coastal communities by supporting research and extension services that use relevant scientific, local, and traditional knowledge and assets to identify, prioritize, and address challenges and opportunities related to changing environmental, economic, and social/cultural conditions.

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### **Fisheries and Aquaculture**

Fisheries, aquaculture, and their associated processing, retail, technology, and tourism businesses support diverse economic and cultural activities that help to define the region’s identity, support the livelihoods of people, and draw millions of visitors each year. Maine Sea Grant’s research, extension, and community engagement work in this area is focused on developing and supporting sustainable and adaptive management; engaging harvesters, sea farmers, and community partners in science, monitoring, and management; and supporting efforts to help communities and industry realize direct benefits from their engagement.

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**Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development**

Finding sustainable solutions to the complex challenges that dominate headlines throughout Maine and around the world requires a level of environmental literacy and new approaches to workforce development that expand upon those traditionally provided in formal education and technical training programs. Maine Sea Grant’s work in this focus area aligns with the goal of supporting an environmentally literate public and diverse workforce that is skilled and ready to use and apply scientific, traditional, and cultural knowledge to identify questions, draw evidence-based conclusions, and address issues that affect the ecological health, economic vitality, and resilience of coastal communities and ecosystems.

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We seek proposals that contribute to Maine Sea Grant and state priority information needs and utilize scientific, traditional, or local approaches to advance knowledge. Proposals that explicitly link with strategies and actions described in the Maine Climate Council’s Climate Action Plan *Maine Won’t Wait* will receive additional merit in the review process.

## B. Eligibility

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Maine Sea Grant is administered by the University of Maine, but the research competition is open to investigators affiliated with any public or private higher education institution, municipal, state, federal, or tribal entity, research laboratory, or other community or non-profit institution within the state of Maine. Maine Sea Grant welcomes proposals for collaborative projects, and partnerships among academic and research institutions, tribes, agencies, local government, industry, community, and other user groups are encouraged. For this competition, we also invite project funding requests to support smaller-scale collaborative projects, community-based partnerships, and synergistic activities where local interests are equal partners or lead in the implementation of research projects and activities. We are especially interested in receiving proposals from investigators new to Maine Sea Grant and in supporting graduate and undergraduate students. Researchers are eligible to submit only one proposal as lead PI, but may serve as a Co-PI on other proposals. Maine Sea Grant requires active sharing, extension and educational efforts and outputs in conjunction with the award of this funding and all results are subject to NOAA data-sharing policies and must be made freely available to the public.

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, income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this competitive research opportunity.

Researchers and their team members are expected to represent Maine Sea Grant with the highest integrity and ethical standards. They are expected to foster an equitable, positive, and respectful working and learning environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. They must abide by the standard code of conduct policies of their home institution(s) including, but not limited to, any personnel policy, policy regarding sexual harassment, policy regarding workplace violence, and policy regarding ethical behavior. The funding provided through this research award is subject to NOAA policies relating to scientific integrity and sexual assault or harassment that may be in force at the time of the award. This code of conduct will be enforced in accordance with university policies.

## C. Funding levels and duration

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Proposed research activities may be one or two years in duration (2026–2028). 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 research projects up to \$200,000 (including all direct and indirect costs). 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.** We encourage smaller funding requests intended to enhance capacity, build and strengthen partnerships, and deepen engagement in meaningful ways (i.e., networking building activities such as meetings, workshops, and other activities to facilitate community connections and participatory research). Sea Grant funding requires a 50% non-federal match; all final proposals must indicate source and level of available non-federal match. Proposals without sufficient match will not be considered. Examples of cost share sources include non-federal salaries, wages and benefits of those working on the project; expendable supplies and equipment; boat time; and donated volunteer time, supplies, space or equipment. Foundation, state and local grants and other state funds are eligible sources of cost share funds with documented approval from those sources. Please reach out to Maine Sea Grant Assistant Director for Research Jessica Jansujwicz ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)), if you need to discuss potential match options.

## D. Proposal process and timeline

The development and review of Maine Sea Grant proposals is a multi-step process outlined in the following sections. Proposals, including Letters of Intent (LOI) and full proposals are to be submitted electronically to Maine Sea Grant using the [InfoReady online application interface](#). Please be sure to allow ample time for online proposal completion and submission. 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 (ORA). Here is the general timeline for proposal submission:

**February 4, 2025:** Letters of Intent (LOI) due in [InfoReady](#) by **11:59 pm EST**

**April 14, 2025:** Notice of Intent (NOI) to submit a full proposal due by email to ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)) by **11:59 pm EST**

**May 15, 2025:** Full proposals due in [InfoReady](#) by **11:59 pm EST**. To be eligible for a full proposal, applicants must submit both an LOI (**due February 4**) and an NOI (**due April 14**)

**October 2025:** Selection of projects

**Early 2026:** Project start date



## II. Proposal components and review process

### A. Letters of Intent (LOI): required components

Letters of Intent (LOI) must contain the following required elements. LOIs that do not include all components will not be considered. Proposals must be single-spaced using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and both sides of the page. **There is a 3-page limit to the project narrative.** Literature citations do not contribute to the 3-page limit. The narrative should be written for a nonspecialist, scientifically literate audience.

1. **List of investigators:** Name, email, affiliation, and role in the project (please include principal investigator, co-principal investigator(s), and any additional personnel involved in the project).
2. **Project Abstract:** A brief summary of the project that describes the objectives, approach, and rationale. (250-word limit)
3. **Project Narrative:** (3-page limit)
  - 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 four focus areas and the cross-cutting principles outlined in our current [Strategic Plan](#). It is particularly important to explicitly address the anticipated societal impacts of the research by explaining how the information obtained will be used by an identified group of interested parties. If the idea originated with an interested party then state and explain how your results will impact their needs. Please also indicate if/how the proposed work relates to, or complements, Maine Sea Grant's ongoing research or extension efforts. (See [seagrant.umaine.edu/research-program-development-projects/](http://seagrant.umaine.edu/research-program-development-projects/) for information on Maine Sea Grant-funded research projects.)
  - b. **Objectives and approach:** Describe the major goals and objectives of the research, including the questions or hypotheses that will be addressed or tested. Give an overview of the activities involved, the 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 and engagement:** Describe the strategies that will be used to: (1) engage diverse partners and end users throughout all phases of the research study, including proposal development and (2) communicate the research results to interested parties. We encourage outreach approaches, activities, and cultural events that strive to make connections between art, science, and community impact. Applicants are encouraged to work with Maine Sea Grant staff and to identify and engage communities, individuals and organizations early on. Staff are also available to facilitate interactions with potential project partners and participants and to discuss specific outreach, communications and education ideas. Applicants are encouraged to discuss outreach goals and strategies with Natalie Springuel, Marine Extension Program Leader ([nspringuel@coa.edu](mailto:nspringuel@coa.edu)).



- e. Budget:** General description of the project's funding needs and total amount to be requested. Please include an overall budget number and indicate the project duration (12–24 months). State whether students will be supported and estimate the cost of outreach aspects, such as printing costs, outreach-related meetings or workshops. Please note: the budget should include all direct (including fringe benefits) and indirect costs of the research. A 50% match of non-federal funds (i.e., one dollar of match for every two dollars of federal money received) is required. Examples of match include non-federal salaries, wages and benefits of those working on the project; expendable supplies and equipment; boat time; and donated volunteer time, supplies, space, or equipment. Please reach out to Maine Sea Grant Assistant Director for Research Jessica Jansujwicz ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)), if you need to discuss potential match options.
- f. Literature cited (does not count towards the 3-page limit):** Provide complete citations for all literature referenced in the proposal.

## B. Letters of Intent (LOI): review process

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LOI are evaluated by an in-state advisory panel. The objective at this stage of review is to identify potential projects that provide the most promise in advancing knowledge in one (or more) of the four identified Maine Sea Grant Focus Area strategic goals and objectives and with significant potential for societal impact. The LOI review is primarily focused on the relevance and potential of the project, rather than scientific merit, although obvious flaws in project design will be considered. The LOI stage also offers the opportunity to give applicants feedback on how their proposals might be improved. Panelists will be asked to identify realized or potential conflicts of interest among submitted proposals and will be asked to sign a reviewer conflict of interest and confidentiality form. Panelists that identify a conflict of interest will not participate in the review or discussion process of the proposed projects(s) for which they have a conflict.

LOI review criteria include, but are not limited to:

1. Does the proposed work apply in a meaningful way to one (or more) of Maine Sea Grant's Focus Area strategic goals and objectives?
2. Does the proposed work integrate one or more of Maine Sea Grant's cross-cutting principles?
3. Does the proposed work engage diverse partners and end users throughout all phases of the project and identify how these different interests may benefit from the results?
4. Is the outreach strategy well-conceived and appropriate?
5. Does the proposed work integrate concepts and methods from multiple disciplinary perspectives and engage researchers from both the social and biophysical sciences?
6. Does the project develop cross-cultural perspectives in research by weaving different ways of knowing (scientific, local, traditional) and engaging diverse experiences and expertise on emerging environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues?

7. Does the project provide student training, mentorship, and/or workforce development opportunities?
8. Does the proposed work relate to, or complement, Maine Sea Grant's ongoing research or extension efforts? (See [seagrant.umaine.edu/research-program-development-projects/](https://seagrant.umaine.edu/research-program-development-projects/) for information on previous Maine Sea Grant-funded research projects.)
9. Does the project advance state priority needs and explicitly link with strategies and actions described in the 2024 Maine Climate Council's Climate Action Plan [Maine Won't Wait?](#)

The in-state advisory panel will consider the review criteria and assign quantitative numerical scores for each of the criteria above to generate an overall proposal score. Scores will follow the scheme of 1 point: *poor/does not meet criteria* to 5 points: *excellent/substantially meet criteria*. Criteria 1–2 will receive more weight in the review process. During the review panel discussion, the advisory panel will provide qualitative scores for each proposal, in the form of High, Medium, and Low, after the discussion of each proposal. Quantitative scores and qualitative feedback will be used to develop a consensus ranking of all proposals. The advisory panel's evaluations are advisory; final decisions on inviting full proposals will be made by Maine Sea Grant management.

Applicants who submit the most promising Letters of Intent will be encouraged to submit full proposals. Applicants will be required to submit a Notice of Intent to apply by April 14, 2025 (more details in section D below). Full proposals are to be submitted electronically to Maine Sea Grant through the [InfoReady online application interface](#) by **May 15, 2025 11:59 pm EST**. Full proposal development and evaluation processes are described below. ***Applicants must have submitted an LOI and a NOI to be eligible to submit a full proposal.*** LOI applicants not encouraged to submit a full proposal by Maine Sea Grant may still choose to submit a full proposal. Applicants of discouraged LOIs that choose to submit a full proposal should be aware that their chance of funding success is low given the typical volume of proposals received and funding available.

## C. LOI submission deadlines and decision timetable

**February 4, 2025:** Letters of Intent (LOI) due in [InfoReady](#) by **11:59 pm EST**

**Mid-late March 2025:** Advisory panel reviews LOI and makes recommendations to Maine Sea Grant regarding full proposal development.

**Late March-early April 2025:** Applicants receive proposal feedback and are encouraged or discouraged regarding development of full proposals.

**April 14, 2025:** Notice of Intent (NOI) to submit a full proposal due by email [sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu) by **11:59 pm EST** (*please see Section D below*)



## D. Important note: Notice of Intent for full proposal

Full project proposals will only be accepted from applicants who submitted an LOI to the Maine Sea Grant 2026–2028 request for proposals. **Applicants who intend to submit a full proposal must also submit (by email) a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the Assistant Director for Research ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)) by 11:59 pm EST April 14, 2025 using this template:**

The Notice of Intent (NOI) must include the following components:

- **Applicant(s) name and institution**
- **Project title**
- **Suggested reviewers:** Provide the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of a minimum of four people you consider qualified to review the proposal. Reviewers must have no conflict of interests with any of the applicants. Contact Sea Grant Assistant Director for Research at [sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu) if you need guidance.
- **Conflict of interest:** Indicate any individuals you believe should not be allowed to review your proposal, together with a brief explanation of your concern.

**Completed Notice of Intent should be emailed to the Assistant Director for Research ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)) by 11:59 pm EST April 14, 2025. Please use the following email subject line: **Notice of Intent: 2026–2028 Maine Sea Grant Biennial RFP.****

## E. Full proposal components

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Full proposals are to be submitted through the [InfoReady online application interface](#) and must contain the following required elements. Proposals that do not include all components will not be considered.

**Project title:** Exact title as it appears in the rest of the application. Please keep titles succinct.

**Project period:** Initiation and completion dates. Proposals should request a start date on or later than February 1, 2026 and a completion date of January 31, 2028, or earlier. Project duration is no more than 24 months.

**Investigators:** Names, affiliations, addresses, phone numbers, and emails of the principal investigator, co-principal investigators, and any other project personnel who will significantly contribute to the project. Do not include collaborators or others who will not dedicate time to the project (directly or in-kind).

**Project abstract:** A brief summary of the project that describes the objectives, methodology or approach, and rationale. This should provide a clear and concise description of the project in terms that are understandable by individuals who are not experts in your field. **250-word limit**

**Project narrative:** Proposals must be single-spaced using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and both sides of the page. **There is a 10-page limit to the project narrative, including figures and tables.** The page limit establishes the maximum length of a proposal and is not intended to be a target. Applicants should strive to be as succinct and concise as possible in explaining the project. Proposals should be written so that reviewers who are not familiar with conditions in Maine can understand the context and relevance of the proposed project. The 10-page limit covers the following required components (1–5) and includes any tables or figures used to explain the research. Literature citations (6) do not contribute to the 10-page limit.

- 1. Background and rationale:** Describe the broader context of the topic, issue, or problem that you propose to address and clearly identify how it applies to one (or more) of Maine Sea Grant's focus area goals and objectives (actions) and cross-cutting principles. Describe the potential users of the information and how they will benefit from the project outcomes. If the idea originated with an interested party then state and explain how your results will impact their needs. Discuss the research relative to the current state of knowledge in the field and to previous or ongoing research by the applicant and/or other investigators.
- 2. Project goals and objectives:** Provide a statement of the project's goals and objectives. Explain the questions that will be addressed or hypotheses that will be tested in the research.
- 3. Proposed approach:** Describe the methods that will be used in accomplishing project objectives. Include a description of proposed activities, how these activities help further project

goals, and a timeline. This section of the proposal should be written for technical experts in the field, using the appropriate terminology. The research plan should be consistent with the highest standards in the discipline. Particular attention should be paid to experimental design, appropriate methodology, and data analysis. This section should also address the goals and requirements highlighted in this request for proposals.

- 4. Outreach and engagement:** Describe the strategies that will be used to: (1) engage diverse partners and end users throughout all phases of the research study, including proposal development and (2) communicate the research results to interested parties. The overall goal of outreach is to effect change by having individuals, groups, or institutions use scientifically based and traditional/local information when making decisions. Accordingly, engaging diverse interests in the development and implementation of research projects is critical to ensure that project processes and products are accessible and useful for individuals and groups with different priorities and capacities. Outreach is an 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. We encourage outreach approaches, activities, and cultural events that strive to make connections between art, science, and community impact.

Applicants are encouraged to review [Maine Sea Grant's public outreach and engagement document](#) and discuss outreach goals and strategies with Natalie Springuel, Marine Extension Program Leader ([nspringuel@coa.edu](mailto:nspringuel@coa.edu)) and Jessica Jansujwicz, Maine Sea Grant's Assistant Director for Research ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)). Applicants are encouraged to work with Maine Sea Grant staff to identify and engage communities, individuals and organizations early on. Staff are also available to facilitate interactions with potential project partners and participants and to discuss specific outreach, communications, and education ideas.

- 5. Student engagement:** Briefly describe the involvement of high school, undergraduate, graduate students, or post-doctoral researchers in the proposed research.
- 6. Literature cited:** Provide complete citations for all literature referenced in the proposal. **References are not included in the word count.**

### **Budget form**

Applicants completing a full proposal will be required to fill out a NOAA 90-4 excel budget form using the template that can be downloaded from [InfoReady](#) in the applicant's proposal submission page. PIs must provide an accurate and detailed budget that shows appropriate match. After completing the 90-4 budget form, it must be uploaded to InfoReady in the designated section.

Budgets for all full proposals must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional sponsored programs office prior to submission to our office. If the applicant submits their budget at least two weeks ahead of the deadline, the Maine Sea Grant fiscal team will review it for accuracy.

- 1. Matching funds: 50% match of federal funds (i.e., one dollar of match for every two dollars of federal money received) is required. 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.** Matching funds on Sea Grant proposals must be from non-federal sources. Examples of match include non-federal salaries, wages and benefits of those working on the project; expendable supplies and equipment; boat time; and donated volunteer time, supplies, space or equipment. For questions about appropriate match, contact Maine Sea Grant or your institution's sponsored program office.
- 2. Note for all applicants:** Prepare a budget for each year of the project and a total summary budget (if the project is for two years), including both Maine Sea Grant and match funding. The budget should include all direct costs (including fringe benefits) and indirect costs of the project. Applicants should contact the sponsored research office of their home institution to obtain the current rates for fringe benefits and indirect costs. Be sure to indicate which salaries and wages are subject to indirect costs, and those not subject to indirect costs. Applicants must budget for all costs of the project, including anticipated salary and wage increases for year 2.
- 3. Note for applicants outside the University of Maine:** University of Maine indirect costs must be added to the first \$25,000 of the total budget for grant administration. See the University of Maine website for the most up-to-date rates [umaine.edu/ora/proposals/indirect-costs-fa/rates/](http://umaine.edu/ora/proposals/indirect-costs-fa/rates/)
- 4. Notes for applicants from more than one institution:** A yearly and total budget for each institution and a yearly and total budget for the overall project must be prepared and submitted. Applicants outside the University of Maine see note (3). If the awarded project contains subawards or the primary award is to an off-campus institution, the project must also match indirect costs that the University of Maine will charge at a rate of 26% of the first \$25,000 (\$6,500).
- 5. Graduate education:** Because graduate education is a priority for Maine Sea Grant, applicants are encouraged to include support for graduate students in their projects. Graduate student stipends should account for minimum rates at the applicant's institution. For example, minimum graduate student research assistant stipends at the University of Maine are \$22,667 (add 3%/year) for Masters students and \$26,667 (add 3%/year) for PhD students for twelve months.

For University of Maine applicants please refer to: [umaine.edu/ora/proposals/indirect-costs-fa/rates/](http://umaine.edu/ora/proposals/indirect-costs-fa/rates/) for the most up-to-date information on minimum stipends, health insurance, and tuition rates for graduate students. Requests for student support at other universities should be checked with their home institution. 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. For example, the University of Maine requires at least 50% of the cost of health insurance and also full tuition for the period

of performance. This requirement may be waived if the student has these costs covered from other sources. Tuition is exempt from indirect costs. Requests for student support at other universities should be checked with that institution.

6. **Outreach:** Applicants must budget for the cost of outreach aspects of their project, such as printing costs, or outreach-related meetings or workshops.
7. **Budget justification:** In greater detail, justify all elements of the budget. A budget justification template can be downloaded from InfoReady in the applicant's proposal submission page. Justifications will need to be entered for all budget items. **It is expected that expenditures are thoughtfully considered and well justified at the full proposal stage.**

**Previous Sea Grant support (if applicable):** All principal investigators who have received Sea Grant (Maine or National) support are required to provide a summary (two-page limit) 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.

**Current and pending support:** 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. (*Note:* There is no required template. Applicants may use other agency/funder templates, e.g., NSF)

**CVs of principal investigator(s):** (2-page limit for each investigator): Indicate institutional affiliation and key professional details. List up to five publications most relevant to the proposal, plus up to five additional recent publications.

**Data Management Plan:** NOAA requires that all environmental data collected from funded projects be visible, accessible, and understandable to users. Applicants will be required to complete a data management plan that addresses these aspects. The form, to be completed by the applicant, will be provided on InfoReady as part of the application process and submitted through InfoReady as part of the application package. If the proposed research will not generate environmental data, then a Data Management Plan will need to be stated as such: "This project will not generate any environmental data."

For detailed guidance, please view the current version of the policy, including a definition of environmental data (which can include socioeconomic and model data), download any updates and access additional implementation resources at the following permanent URL:

[nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data\\_Sharing\\_Directive\\_v3.0.pdf](https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf)

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire:** The objectives of NEPA are to disclose, analyze, and consider environmental information as criteria when making decisions about federal actions and to inform the public of potential impacts and alternatives and involve the public in decision making. Applicants are required to complete a NEPA Questionnaire that gauges potential impact to the environment. We request applicants give extra consideration to describing the proposed location of research activities and documenting permits that will be required to conduct research activities. Note that any Sea Grant funded fieldwork cannot commence until the necessary permits have been obtained and copies sent to Maine Sea Grant and the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). The form, to be completed by the applicant, will be provided on InfoReady as part of the application process and submitted through InfoReady as part of the application package.

Maine Sea Grant can provide assistance and guidance with completing the Data Management Plan and NEPA Questionnaire. Contact Assistant Director for Research Jessica Jansujwicz ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)) with questions or for assistance.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** Potential PIs who plan to conduct human subjects research must state whether the proposed research is subject to Institutional Review Board (IRB). No work involving human subjects may be undertaken, conducted, or costs incurred and/or charged for human subjects research until appropriate documentation is approved in writing by IRB. Potential PIs should provide a copy of IRB approval if completed prior to full proposal submission. If the PI intends to seek IRB approval after selection, a copy of IRB approval must be provided prior to commencing human subjects research. Absence of IRB approval at the time of submission will result in the NSGO placing restrictions on the award until those permits are provided, and host institutions may have additional restrictions on such funds, per their own policies.

**Letters of support (optional):** Provide 2 or 3 letters from project partners (e.g., government agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, industry, etc.) that support your proposed work.

**Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved demographics question:** Principal investigators on all submitted full proposals will receive an OMB-approved demographics question link by email. It is required that this question concerning demographics be asked, and your response is voluntary.



## F. Full proposal review process

The full proposal evaluation process has several steps outlined below:

1. Full proposals are reviewed by external US and international experts in the area of the proposed research. Each proposal will receive 3 written reviews. All reviewers will be external to Maine Sea Grant, and will consist of disciplinary and engagement experts, all individuals who certify no conflict of interest. Applicants are requested to suggest potential reviewers and may also identify potential reviewers with conflicts of interest (on the Notice of Intent to submit a full proposal, see guidelines above, [Section D](#)). These scientific peer reviewers will consider, comment, and numerically score the proposals on the following proposal evaluation criteria:

Criteria	Proposal Weighting	Elements
<b>Relevance</b>	<b>35</b>	<p>Degree to which the proposed project contributes to Maine Sea Grant and state priority information needs and advances knowledge in at least one of Maine Sea Grant’s strategic focus areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Does the proposal clearly describe the problem and identify how it applies to one or more of Maine Sea Grant’s strategic focus areas? (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> <li>■ <i>Does the proposal explicitly link to Maine Sea Grant’s cross-cutting principles? (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> <li>■ <i>Does the proposal describe anticipated outcomes and/or deliverables and how they may be applied to solving or better understanding problems and issues relevant to Maine Sea Grant’s mission? (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> <li>■ <i>Does the proposal clearly explain the importance of the topic to Maine coasts and coastal communities? (Score 1–5 points)</i></li> <li>■ <i>To what extent does the project address emerging issues in Maine and identify interests that would likely impact or be impacted by the project results? (Score 1–5 points)</i></li> <li>■ <i>Does the proposal explain how the information produced will be used by an identified group of interested parties? (Score 1–5 points)</i></li> <li>■ <i>Does the project explicitly link with strategies and actions described in the 2024 Maine Climate Council’s Climate Action Plan <a href="#">Maine Won’t Wait</a>? (Score 1–5 points)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 5 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b></p>

Criteria	Proposal Weighting	Elements
<b>Approach</b>	<b>25</b>	<p>Clarity of the project’s approach and objectives, the proposal specifically provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Detailed description of activities proposed during the project and how these activities will help further project goals. (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> <li>■ <i>Logical and achievable timelines for project activities (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> </ul> <p>Degree to which the proposed project incorporates the goals and requirements highlighted in this RFP, including how the proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Engages diverse partners and end users throughout all phases of the project, including proposal development and community outreach (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> <li>■ <i>Integrates concepts and methods from multiple disciplinary perspectives and engages researchers from both the social and biophysical sciences (Score 1–5 points)*</i></li> <li>■ <i>Develops cross-cultural perspectives in research by weaving different ways of knowing (scientific, local, and traditional) and engaging diverse experiences and expertise on emerging environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues (Score 1–5 points)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 5 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b></p>
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>10</b>	<p>Degree to which the project describes approaches to ensure the results and outcomes of the project will be shared with relevant audiences in Maine or beyond, including an appropriate timeline for outreach and engagement activities (Score 1–10 points)*</p> <p><b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 10 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b></p>

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Proposal Weighting</b>	<b>Elements</b>
<b>Scientific merit</b>	<b>10</b>	Degree to which the proposed project advances scientific or educational goals and whether the approach is technically sound. Extent to which the research contributes to the current state of knowledge in the field, to previous or ongoing research by the applicant and/or other investigators, including research supported by Maine Sea Grant. <b>(Score 1–10 points)*</b>  <b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 10 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b>
<b>Student engagement</b>	<b>10</b>	Degree to which the project provides meaningful student training, professional development, and/or mentorship opportunities <b>(Score 1–10 points)*</b>  <b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 10 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>5</b>	Degree to which the budget request aligns with proposed activities and outputs <b>(Score 1–5 points)*</b>  <b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 5 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b>
<b>Qualification of applicants</b>	<b>5</b>	Applicants possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project, with consideration to career stage and past performance. Roles and responsibilities of project participants are clearly defined. <b>(Score 1–5 points)*</b>  <b>* 1 point: poor/does not meet criteria to 5 points: excellent/substantially meet criteria.</b>

The scientific peer reviewers will assign numerical scores for each review criteria. Scoring will be on a scale from 1 to 5, 10, or 30 (depending on the criteria listed above), with 1 being the lowest (poor) rating. Scientific peer reviewers will also be given an opportunity to write qualitative comments about each assigned proposal.

2. A Technical Review Panel (TRP) of external experts will convene to evaluate proposals using the same criteria as the written review criteria ([Section F–1](#) above). The purpose of the Technical Review Panel is to evaluate full proposals on overall quality based on these review criteria and

the written expert peer reviews to provide recommendations to the Maine Sea Grant program on which full proposals should be considered for funding. The Technical Review Panel makes final determinations on the fundability of each full proposal (i.e., fundable or not fundable). The Technical Review Panel will provide both a quantitative assessment (scores for each criterion according to the scale in [Section F-1](#) above) and qualitative assessment (during the review panel meeting, each individual assigns a High, Medium, and Low score to each proposal) to develop a consensus ranked order of all proposals to be recommended to the Maine Sea Grant management team. All reviewers will be external to Maine Sea Grant, and will consist of disciplinary and engagement experts, all individuals who certify no conflict of interest. The Technical Review Panel may be conducted in person or held virtually.

3. TRP recommendations for funding of Sea Grant proposals are made to the Maine Sea Grant management team. The management team will consider feedback provided by reviewers and all information available to make final decisions on projects selected for funding. The Maine Sea Grant Director, after consultation with Maine Sea Grant management team, makes final funding recommendations to the National Sea Grant Program Office based on these rankings except in instances where the program chooses to select a meritorious project out of rank order based upon the following selection factors:
  - Availability of funding
  - Balance of selected projects across strategic program priorities
  - Similarities of projects funded previously by Maine Sea Grant
  - Past performance—timeliness of progress, reporting, and correspondence with Maine Sea Grant related to prior awards
  - Diversity of institutions, investigators, geography, career stage, and engaged interests and partners.
4. Final award decisions are subject to concurrence by Maine Sea Grant’s Program Officer, or designee, from the National Sea Grant Office, who attends the full proposal Technical Review Panel.

## G. Full proposal submission deadlines and decision timetable

**April 14, 2025:** Notice of Intent to submit full proposal with list of suggested reviewers due to the Assistant Director for Research via email ([sgresearch@maine.edu](mailto:sgresearch@maine.edu)) by **11:59 pm EST**

*The dates in green apply only to proposals submitted by University of Maine Pls.*

**April 24, 2025:** Draft of budget, justification, and abstract is due to the University of Maine's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORA) by **4:30 pm** Proposal Approval Routing System (PARS) should be initiated.

**May 8, 2025:** Working draft of all forms and attachments, finalized budget and justification due to the University of Maine's ORA.

**May 12:** Final proposal package must be submitted to ORA by **4:30 pm**

**May 15, 2025:** Full proposals due in [InfoReady](#) by **11:59 pm EST**. To be eligible for a full proposal, applicants *must* submit both *and* LOI (due **February 4**) and an NOI (due **April 14**)

**May 15–June 16, 2025:** Full proposal scientific peer review process.

**Early to Mid-August:** Technical Review Panel reviews proposal packages in accordance with evaluation criteria and makes recommendations to Maine Sea Grant management. 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 funding.

**September 2025:** Selected projects and rationale submitted to the National Sea Grant Office for concurrence.

**October 2025:** Applicants informed of decisions.

**February 1, 2026:** Anticipated 2026–2028 awards begin.



### III. Reporting requirements

All NOAA programs are required to report annually on their performance to NOAA leadership, OMB, and Congress. Thus, a part of the proposal evaluation will be based on outcomes and impacts of the research.

Reporting requirements include submission of an annual report and participation in Sea Grant–related meetings. Additional assistance may be requested in periodic updates and presentations for Maine Sea Grant outreach, education, and special reporting efforts. By accepting grants from Maine Sea Grant, investigators agree to these requirements. Failure to submit timely reports may result in freezing of remaining grant funds and denial of future funding opportunities.

Federal funding sources shall be identified in all outreach materials, conference presentations and posters, and scholarly publications. An Acknowledgments section shall be included in the body of the publication stating the relevant project and award numbers. In addition, funding sources shall be reported during the publication submission process using the FundRef mechanism ([crossref.org/fundref/](https://crossref.org/fundref/)), with funding acknowledgement to “Maine Sea Grant, University of Maine.”

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) holds federal trademark registrations for the NOAA emblem and asserts common law trademark rights in the Sea Grant logo. Recipient is permitted to use the NOAA emblem and Sea Grant logo for the following limited purposes and in the following manner:

- Recipient shall ensure the NOAA emblem and the Sea Grant logo are placed on all print and digital media produced by the recipient and subrecipients under this award, including, but not limited to, scientific posters and presentations, extension products, and administrative materials such as conference agendas and program websites. This logo placement is in addition to the acknowledgement of sponsorship statement required for publications and videos by the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions.
- Use of the NOAA emblem and the Sea Grant logo shall be in compliance with style guidance and standards specified at [seagrant.noaa.gov/inside-sea-grant/communications](https://seagrant.noaa.gov/inside-sea-grant/communications).
- The Sea Grant logo may be either the approved program-specific logo or the national Sea Grant logo without the program designation.
- Recipient may not use the NOAA emblem or Sea Grant logo for other purposes, including lobbying or issue advocacy, endorsing a product or organization, or communications to elected officials or federal agencies. Recipient may not use the NOAA emblem or Sea Grant logo in a negative or defamatory manner.

## IV. Additional information and Maine Sea Grant contacts

Additional Information can be found at: <https://seagrant.umaine.edu/funding/research>

Maine Sea Grant 2024–2027 Strategic Plan:  
[seagrant.umaine.edu/resource/strategic-plan-2024-2027/](https://seagrant.umaine.edu/resource/strategic-plan-2024-2027/)

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact Assistant Director for Research Jessica Jansujwicz to discuss proposal development and Extension Lead Natalie Springuel to discuss effective ways to work with the Maine Sea Grant Extension Team and to communicate research.

**Assistant Director for Research: Dr. Jessica Jansujwicz**

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Tel: 207.581.4880

**Extension Lead: Natalie Springuel**

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Tel: 207.288.2944 x5834