

## Fiscal Year 2019 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Funding Opportunity Description	4
A. Program Objective	4
B. Program Priorities	5
C. Program Authority	5
II. Award Information	5
A. Funding Availability	5
B. Project/Award Period	5
C. Type of Funding Instrument	6
III. Eligibility Information	6
A. Eligible Applicants	6
B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement	7
C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility	7
IV. Application and Submission Information	7
A. Address to Request Application Package	7
B. Content and Form of Application	7
C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)	13
D. Submission Dates and Times	13
E. Intergovernmental Review	14
F. Funding Restrictions	14
G. Other Submission Requirements	14
V. Application Review Information	14
A. Evaluation Criteria	14
B. Review and Selection Process	15
C. Selection Factors	15
D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates	15
VI. Award Administration Information	15
A. Award Notices	16
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	16
C. Reporting	19
VII. Agency Contacts	19
VIII. Other Information	20

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2019 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005907

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

Dates: Applications are due to the State Sea Grant Program in your state by 5:00 PM, local time on January 30, 2019. If your state does not have a Sea Grant Program, please check Section VII, Agency Contacts located in the Full Funding Opportunity and the Program Locations tab on <http://seagrant.noaa.gov> to contact a Sea Grant program.

The state Sea Grant Program must transmit the received application via Grants.gov by 5:00 pm, Eastern Time February 27, 2019. A date and time receipt indication will be included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Sea Grant College Program was enacted by U.S. Congress in 1966 (amended in 2008, Public Law 110-394) to support leveraged federal and state partnership that harness the intellectual capacity of the nation's universities and research institutions to solve problems and generate opportunities in coastal communities.

The NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship Program in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics expects to award at least three new Ph.D. Fellowships in 2019 to students who are interested in careers related to marine ecosystem and population dynamics, with a focus on modeling and managing systems of living marine resources. These fellowships can provide support for up to three years. The emphasis will be on the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing marine ecosystems, for assessing the status of fish, invertebrate, and other targeted species stocks and for assessing the status of marine mammals, seabirds, and other protected species.

Fellows will work on thesis problems of public interest and relevance to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the guidance of NMFS mentors at participating NMFS Science Centers or Offices. The NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics meets NOAA's Healthy Oceans goal of "Marine fisheries, habitats, biodiversity sustained with healthy and productive ecosystems."

The expected annual award per Fellow will be \$48,000 (Federal plus matching funds), jointly funded by NOAA Fisheries and Sea Grant.

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005907. Additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application are provided in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document available at <https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

## I. Funding Opportunity Description

## A. Program Objective

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) support a Ph.D. Graduate Fellowship Program in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics. The intent of the Program is to award a limited number of Fellowships each year to students who are interested in careers related to population and ecosystem dynamics with applications to living marine resources. Candidate projects will focus on at least one of the following: 1) the population dynamics of living marine resources; 2) stock assessment methodologies; 3) marine ecosystem modeling; 4) integrated ecosystem assessments; and 5) ecosystem-based management of marine ecosystems.

This announcement is to solicit applications for Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics. There is a parallel and similar announcement soliciting applications for Fellowships in Marine Resource Economics - NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005909.

The goals of the Program are to 1) encourage qualified applicants to pursue careers in population and ecosystem dynamics related to living marine resources; 2) increase available expertise related to quantitative ecology for systems of living marine resources; 3) foster closer relationships between academic scientists and NMFS; and 4) provide real-world experience to graduate students and accelerate their career development. The Fellowship covers both population and ecosystem dynamics to ensure support for Fellows who conduct research in support of assessments of living marine resource stocks as well as conduct broadly-scoped ecosystem assessments, implement ecosystem-based management, and evaluate system-level considerations of living marine resources. As both ecosystem and population dynamics rely heavily on quantitative marine ecology methods and skills, this announcement reflects that underlying commonality.

The Fellowships can provide support for up to three years for highly qualified graduate students working towards a Ph.D. in quantitative ecology, ecosystem ecology, population dynamics or related fields of study such as wildlife biology, fishery biology, natural resource management, marine biology, quantitative ecology applied mathematics, applied statistics, or simulation modeling, or study. Each Fellow will be required to work closely with an expert (mentor) from NMFS who may provide data for the Fellow's thesis, serve on the Fellow's committee, and host an annual summer internship at the participating NMFS facility. Mentors will be from participating NMFS Science Centers or Offices.

## B. Program Priorities

The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) is seeking applications for one of its Fellowship programs to fulfill its broad educational responsibilities, enhance workforce development, and to strengthen the collaboration between Sea Grant and the NMFS. Fellows will work on thesis problems of public interest and relevance to NMFS and work with NMFS mentors at participating NMFS Science Centers or Offices. The program priorities for this opportunity support NOAA's Healthy Oceans goal of "Marine fisheries, habitats, biodiversity sustained with healthy and productive ecosystems."

## C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the National Sea Grant College and 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 for the 2019 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics. The Graduate Fellowship Program expects to award at least three new PhD Fellowships each year to students who are interested in careers related to population and ecosystem dynamics of living marine resources and/or marine ecosystem dynamics.

The award for each Fellowship, contingent upon the availability of Federal funds, will be a multi-year cooperative agreement in an amount not to exceed \$40,000 in Federal funds per year. Matching funds of at least 20% of the total Federal request are required, as described in section III.B.

Continued support after the first year will be contingent upon the availability of Federal funds and satisfactory performance by the Fellow.

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 this program fails to receive full funding.

## B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is August 1, 2019, with projects to be completed by July 31, 2022. This will provide support for up to three years, contingent upon the availability of Federal funds and satisfactory performance by the Fellow.

### C. Type of Funding Instrument

#### Cooperative Agreement

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 NMFS mentoring and hosting successful applicants. This involvement may include serving for 10-20 days aboard a research or commercial vessel during a scientific survey or experimental activity. Additionally, the Fellow may work on his/her thesis research or related activity at a participating NMFS facility. The Fellow's work will be overseen by a NMFS mentor who will provide advice and guidance.

## III. Eligibility Information

### A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity: Prospective Fellows must be United States citizens. At the time of application, prospective Population and Ecosystem Dynamics Fellows must be admitted to a PhD degree program in population dynamics, ecosystem dynamics, or a related field such as wildlife biology, fishery biology, natural resource management, marine biology, quantitative ecology, applied mathematics, applied statistics, or simulation modeling at an institution of higher education in the United States or its territories, or submit a signed letter from the institution indicating provisional acceptance to a PhD degree program conditional on obtaining financial support such as this Fellowship. Applications must come from Sea Grant programs and must be submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). Applicants enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant Program must submit to that program. Applicants in states or territories without a Sea Grant program must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the NMFS Fellowship Program Manager whose contact info can be found in section VII.

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by recruiting, retaining and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives and ways of thinking. We

encourage applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, and income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this opportunity.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 20 percent of the federal funding request must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted. The cumulative match at the end of each year of the grant must not fall below 20 percent of the cumulative federal request up to that point. For example, if \$40,000 in Federal funds is requested (the maximum allowable annual request), matching funds must be at least \$8,000. In-kind contributions directly supporting this Application may count towards this matching requirement. See the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>) for more information.

#### 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](http://www.grants.gov) under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005907. 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 these required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to include these elements will result in rejection of the application without review.

Additional guidance on Sea Grant-specific form completion can be found here: Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>)

The Sea Grant program or applicant must redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to [grants.gov](http://grants.gov). PII that must be redacted

from the application includes social security number, date of birth, and student identification number (from transcripts).

Required Elements:

1. Project Narrative

a) Project Proposal Narrative

The Application must include the following documents in the following format:

1) Signed title page: The title page must identify the prospective Fellow, be signed by the faculty advisor and the institutional representative, and provide complete contact information. The proposal title should include "NMFS/Sea Grant Population and Ecosystem Dynamics Graduate Fellowship (full name of student)" as a prefix. The total amount of Federal and matching funds being requested for each project year must be listed.

2) Project summary: The project summary should concisely describe the activity being proposed and the impact that would result from its successful completion. Applicants must use the Sea Grant Project Summary Short Form 90-2 (OMB Control No. 0648-0362), available at <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>. When filling out the form, please follow the below instructions for indicated sections:

- Title: Use the exact title as it appears in the rest of the application.
- Investigators: List name and affiliation of the prospective Fellow's faculty advisor/major professor as the Principal Investigator. List the prospective Fellow, and any other investigators who will significantly contribute to the project, as co-PIs.
- Funding request for each year of the Fellowship, including matching funds.
- Project period: Start and completion dates. Applications for FY 2019 should request a start date of August 1, 2019 and an end date of no later than July 31, 2022.

3) Project proposal: The project proposal is intended to describe the proposed dissertation or the general intended area of study. It must be written by the prospective Fellow and include the following elements:

- A brief summary of the work to be completed
- Rationale for the proposed activity
- The scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested
- Appropriate details on methodology
- Relevance of results.
- The proposal itself must not exceed five (5) pages. References and figures do not count towards the five page limit. Format requirements for the project proposal are:
  - Standard 8.5" x 11" page size
  - 12- point, Times New Roman font for main text (10-point font may be used for



references, footnotes, figure captions and text within figures)

- 1" margins on all sides
  - Single spaced or greater line spacing.
- 4) Curriculum vitae of the student, the faculty advisor, and the NMFS mentor (2 page maximum per individual).
- 5) Signed letter of commitment from the prospective NMFS mentor. If more than one mentor is involved, please provide a letter of commitment from each individual. In addition to noting the NMFS staff member's commitment to serve as a mentor, the letter should briefly address the relevance of the research to NMFS.
- 6) Copies of all official undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.
- 7) Summary of academic training in quantitative methods: Please provide a summary (maximum of 5 sentences) of your academic training in quantitative methods, a listing of your top five classes, in quantitative methods already taken, and classes you intend to take over the spring 2019 semester. Class listings should include course name (though course number e.g., MA 551 can be excluded) and a short description of content covered in course (not to exceed 3 sentences per class).
- 8) Education and career goal statement (not to exceed 2 pages) from the student indicating the number of years for which Fellowship support is being sought and the student's interest in quantitative marine ecology, with a focus on one or more of the following: modeling and managing systems of living marine resources; development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing marine ecosystems; ecosystem-based management; marine population dynamics; or the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing stock status of living marine resources. Format requirements for the education and career goal statement are:
- Standard 8.5" x 11" page size
  - 12-point, Times New Roman font
  - 1" margins on all sides
  - Single spaced or greater line spacing.
- 9) Three signed letters of recommendation, including one from the student's faculty advisor. Please note that the letter of commitment from the NMFS mentor does not count towards the three signed letters of recommendation. If the applicants want the proposed NMFS mentor to also provide a letter of recommendation it should be separate from the letter of commitment.

10) Proof of acceptance (or provisional acceptance), and enrollment in a graduate program in population dynamics, ecosystem dynamics, or related fields of study. For students who have not yet enrolled in the PhD program, the program's acceptance letter is adequate. For students who are already enrolled, a letter from the faculty advisor or university registrar's office is acceptable.

11) Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)

A required Excel file where each project within the Application must be detailed on a separate 90-2 tab of the form, and the overall yearly budget must be provided on the "Yearly Breakdown" tab. The 90-2 Short Form can be found here:

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>. Guidance on how to complete the form is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>).

12) Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)

An Abbreviated Environmental Questionnaire is required with each application. For questions not applicable to your research, please note N/A on the form. Applicants must use the questionnaire at: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>.

A separate questionnaire must be filled out for each project in the application that involves any of the below categories of activities. Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>).

Categories for which a Questionnaire must be completed:

- Research--all Research projects (those whose project ID starts with "R/") and all other projects that include a component of research (including social science research)
- Environmental permits, authorizations or waivers
- Biological take and/or release
- Environmental sampling
- Hazardous or toxic substances and waste
- Permanent or temporary environmental effects
- Endangered or threatened species and/or protected areas
- Known or unknown risks to human health or the environment
- Controversial environmental subject matter

Exceptions - Projects or actions that fall into the below categories do not need an abbreviated environmental compliance questionnaire:

- Program management (i.e., any projects be assigned the “M/” project ID)
- Placeholder projects (e.g., "Future Competed Projects"; these projects will have a Special Award Condition on the grant and undergo environmental compliance review at that time)
- Workshops or conferences that do not involve the above list of actions
- Communication activities that do not involve the above list of actions
- Fellowships where the Sea Grant Program does not have discretion over the fellow’s externally funded research

### 13) Data Management Plan

Data sharing plan not to exceed two (2) pages is required as an appendix. If your project falls under a larger project for which your faculty advisor has already submitted a data sharing plan and you intend to follow the same plan, you may submit that plan for your data sharing plan requirement. If your research will not generate any environmental data, an acceptable data sharing plan is the sentence, "This project will not generate any environmental data." For more information, see Section VI.B.(9).

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

## 2. Budget Narrative

Budget and Budget Justification: Indirect costs are not allowable for either the Fellowship or for any costs associated with the Fellowship [15 CFR 917.11(e), Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships]. Matching funds equivalent to 20 percent of the requested Federal funds must be provided. Source of matching funds must be specified in the budget and may consist of up to one month's salary per year for the faculty adviser, waived tuition, equipment and supplies, and any other costs typically used as matching funds.

In addition to stipend and tuition for the applicant, the budget must include funds for travel to the annual Fellows Symposium and may include funds for equipment, supplies, and discretionary travel (see "Award Information" above). Sub-contractors, if any, should have a separate budget page.

All required forms are available at <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>. Each individual project included with in the application must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification Narratives) in the following format:

a) Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)

A required form used to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the overall proposal and each project in this application. Guidance on filling out the form is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document. The following are required:

- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 Forms describing the yearly and total budgets of the proposal overall (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3).
- A completed Sea Grant 90-4 Form covering the full duration of each project in the application.
- A completed Sea Grant 90-4 Form covering each year of the project in the application.
- Completed Sea Grant 90-4 Forms for the yearly and total budget of any sub-awards associated with each project in the application (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3).

b) Budget Justification

A budget justification narrative for each year of each project in the application that explains budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. This document should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate. Guidance on completing the justifications is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>).

3. Overall Application

In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the Application package on Grants.gov or on the Sea Grant website (links found below). These include:

a) SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)

This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period (August 1, 2019-July 31, 2022), as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the 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.

b) SF-424A Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006)

This form, titled “Instructions for Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs,” must describe the entire yearly funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Federal and match years should each have their own column. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below). There should be a separate budget for each year as well as a cumulative

budget for the entire period of the proposed Fellowship.

c) Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>, OMB Control No. 4060-0006)

The SF-424A Form described above only includes space to report the applicant's yearly federal funds. Complete the Additional SF-424A, Extra Section B to report the yearly non-Federal matching fund budget of the grant. Guidance on filling out the form is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>).

d) 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.

e) 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.

f) SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046)

The form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2013), which may be accessed at [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03add6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200\\_1300&rgn=div8](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03add6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1300&rgn=div8)

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due to the State Sea Grant Program in your state by 5:00PM, local time, January 30, 2019. If your state does not have a Sea Grant Program, please check Section VII, Agency Contacts or select Program Locations on the national Sea Grant website at <http://seagrant.noaa.gov> to obtain program contact information.

The state Sea Grant Program must transmit the application via Grants.gov APPLY such that it is received by 5:00 pm, Eastern Time February 27, 2019 by the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). A date and time receipt indication will be included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

#### 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

Indirect costs are not allowable for either the Fellowship or for any costs associated with the Fellowship including waived indirect costs as match (15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships").

#### G. Other Submission Requirements

Applications must come from Sea Grant programs and must be submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).

If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

### V. Application Review Information

#### A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

1. Academic record and statement of career goals of the student. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics, the academic record is important, especially evidence of quantitative coursework (30 percent), as is the statement of Education and Career goals (10 percent). (40 percent total)
2. Quality of project and applicability to program priorities. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics, the Project Summary should provide evidence of important and innovative research and relate that research to relevant agency priorities. (30 percent)
3. Recommendations and/or endorsements of student. For the NMFS-Sea Fellowships in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics, the expertise of major professor and proposed NMFS mentor will be taken into account. (20 percent)

4. Additional relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; honors and awards; and interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills. (10 percent)

#### B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the Application. Applications will be individually ranked in accordance with the above criteria and assigned scores by an independent review panel. Panel members will provide individual evaluations of applicants, and their ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the applications. 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 below. The selecting official shall make final recommendations for award to the Grants officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

The proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will also be reviewed by the Federal Program Officer to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions. The Federal Program Officer, NEPA Staff Lead, or Grants Specialist may contact the program to discuss questions about the environmental effects, merit, or administrative correctness of the application, and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the grant preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

#### C. 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:

- Balance/distribution of funds across academic disciplines, by type of institution, and/or geographically.
- Availability of funding.
- Program-specific objectives as listed in Section I.A. Program Objective, above.
- Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, funds are expected to be awarded by approximately August 1, 2019. This is the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424).

## VI. Award Administration Information

## A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) will notify each unsuccessful applicant by informing the eligible Sea Grant Program Director through which the application was submitted in writing, via e-mail. The state Sea Grant Programs will, in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the NSGO.

## B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(1) 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>.

(2) 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 apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

(3) Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.

Current Department of Commerce Standard Terms are here:

[http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants\\_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2009%20October%202018.pdf](http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2009%20October%202018.pdf)

(4) Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

(5) Unpaid or Delinquent Tax Liability - Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal



Tax Returns. In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

(6) NEPA- NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500\\_1508.pdf](http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

(7) 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. 200.205. 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 to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

(8) Data Sharing Plan

1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.
2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.
3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.
4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

(9) 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.

(10) Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the Application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded Applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded Applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

### C. Reporting

Financial reports are submitted semi-annually via Grants Online. Performance progress reports should follow program guidelines and are submitted annually via Grants Online. Fellows will be expected to present a review of the progress on their research during the annual Fellows' Symposium.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (31 U.S.C. 6101) 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 Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

## VII. Agency Contacts

Contact OAR.SG.Fellows@noaa.gov; (301) 734-1083.

The National Sea Grant Office mailing address is:

NOAA Sea Grant  
1315 East-West Highway SSMC3, R/SG  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

(301) 734-1066

#### VIII. Other Information

The portion of the award provided to each Fellow for salary (stipend), living expenses (per diem), tuition (unless waived), health insurance and other institution fees, will be determined and distributed by the institution in accordance with its guidelines. It is expected that each Fellow will attend the annual Fellows' Symposium for each year of funding and will make at least one visit per year to the mentor's NMFS facility.

Sea Grant Program information collection and reporting requirements in this notice are authorized by the Office of Management and Budget under Control No. 0648-0362.

Programs 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.

The information provided in the Sea Grant 90-2 Form will be uploaded into the PIER project database. Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the National Sea Grant College Program public website (<http://seagrants.noaa.gov>).

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.