

Request for Proposals

Coastal Resilience Program

Executive Summary

Funding Source: National Sea Grant Law Center, University of Mississippi

Funding Opportunity Title: Coastal Resilience Program

Announcement Type: Notice of Request for Proposals

Timetable: Letters of Intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, April 14, 2023. The anticipated award start date is July 1, 2023.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that the National Sea Grant Law Center is accepting applications from eligible applicants to conduct research on the effectiveness of coastal adaptation laws and policies. The *Coastal Resilience Program* grants have a recommended funding level of \$75,000. The National Sea Grant Law Center anticipates sufficient funding to make one to two grant awards.

Full Announcement

The National Sea Grant Law Center is part of the National Sea Grant College Program. The National Sea Grant Law Center, housed at the University of Mississippi School of Law, was established in 2002 to provide legal research, education, and outreach services to the other Sea Grant College programs and their constituents. (<http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/>). The National Sea Grant Law Center strives to support the creation of new law and policy knowledge through rigorous, peer-reviewed research competitions. Towards that end, the National Sea Grant Law Center requests proposals from eligible applicants to conduct research on the effectiveness of coastal adaptation laws and policies.

This announcement provides the following information:

1. Eligible Applicants
2. Funding Priorities
3. Funding Levels
4. Letters of Intent Format

5. Proposal Format
6. Proposal Submission Instructions
7. Evaluation Procedure
8. Evaluation Criteria
9. Deadline and Submission Information
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Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible and encouraged to participate in this funding opportunity: Sea Grant Programs, institutions of higher education, state agencies, and non-profit organizations that have the ability and capacity to conduct rigorous, non-partisan law and policy research.

Sea Grant 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 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.

Only those applicants who submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by the required deadline are subsequently eligible to submit full proposals.

Funding Priorities

The National Sea Grant Law Center is soliciting applications for legal and policy scholars to examine the effectiveness of discrete coastal adaptation and resilience laws and policies. While various analyses often occur before laws and policies are adopted—such as cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and risk assessment—rarely does analysis happen after laws and policies are adopted. Recent academic articles note the need to review the effectiveness of policies that have been adopted. As communities continue to think about what policies to adopt, these analyses are a useful exercise to determine whether laws and policies have essential elements necessary to achieve objectives. A review of adaptation laws and policies can also become a vital approach to adaptive management. Retrospective law and policy analysis can help policymakers decide which policies to adopt in the future and how to amend

current policies to make them more beneficial. Reviews of adaptation policies can also examine whether diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice goals are met by the policies. Finally, a review of adaptation policies can not only ascertain whether the intended consequences were achieved, but also if any unintended or undesirable consequences occurred.

Projects solicited through this announcement may address laws and policies related to a wide range of coastal adaptation and resilience issues including sea level rise, flooding, amplified storm surge, increased frequency and intensity of storms, land use, or other environmental factors. Projects should focus on laws and policies related to the coastal areas of U.S. coastal states, including the Great Lakes states, and U.S. territories and tribal lands. Successful research projects should be designed in collaboration with the government entity responsible for implementing the current policy to generate new knowledge about the impact and effectiveness of coastal adaptation laws and policies to achieve stated policy objectives.

Projects considered under this request for proposals may use a range of research methodologies. For example:

- Comparative analysis of a discrete state or local coastal adaptation policy according to an existing framework, such as the five factors identified by McDonald & McCormick (2021) to identify best practices. (McDonald, Jan & McCormack, Phillipa C., *Rethinking the role of law in adapting to climate change*, 12:5 *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 726 (2021)).
- Meta-analysis of coastal adaptation laws and policies to identify good candidates for an effectiveness review utilizing methodology similar to that outlined by Bennear & Coglianese (2004). (Bennear, Lori Snyder and Coglianese, Cary, "Evaluating Environmental Policies" (2004). *Faculty Scholarship at Penn Law*.)
- Assessment of the effectiveness of a particular strategy identified and implemented by a state in their Section 309 (Coastal Zone Enhancement Program) Assessment and Strategy under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA). See <https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/enhancement/>.

In addition to supporting research projects that are academically rigorous and societally relevant, the National Sea Grant Law Center is committed to projects that engage and inform relevant communities. Successful projects will include strong engagement and outreach plans that clearly outline how the research will be usable and accessible to key partners and audiences. Researchers must demonstrate that the government entity responsible for implementing the policy will be involved in each phase of the research project. Researchers are strongly encouraged to engage with other prospective end-users and audiences as they develop

their proposal to assess and ensure societal relevance. Examples of engagement and outreach activities could include:

- Partnering with a state agency or organization that will be an end user of the research;
- Engaging community members in the research aspects of your project;
- Writing non-technical summary of research findings for managers and key audiences; or
- Presenting your findings to relevant management and community organizations.

Funding Levels

The recommended funding request for the *Coastal Resilience Program* grants is \$75,000. Matching funds are not required. The National Sea Grant Law Center anticipates sufficient funding to make one to two grant awards.

Letters of Intent Format

To be eligible to submit a full proposal, a Letter of Intent (LOI) is required. LOIs will help the National Sea Grant Law Center identify the required number and qualifications of reviewers and provide feedback to applicants on the appropriateness of the proposed research projects to the *Coastal Resilience Program*. Regardless of the National Sea Grant Law Center's feedback, any applicant that submits an eligible LOI may submit a full proposal.

The LOI (max. 2 page not including CVs) shall consist of the following:

1. Anticipated title of the proposed project.
2. Expected project duration (anticipated start date of July 1, 2023).
3. Total budget request estimate.
4. Lead Principal Investigator: Name, Title, Institutional Affiliation, Contact Information, two-page Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch.
5. Known and Anticipated Co-Investigator(s): Name, Title, Institutional Affiliation, Contact Information, two-page Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch.
6. Brief summary of the proposed research project that clearly states the research problem, study objective and rationale, and interested parties and potential end-users.
7. Brief statement of the applicant's qualifications to conduct the proposed research.

The LOI must be submitted in PDF format via email to Stephanie Otts, sshowalt@olemiss.edu, no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. An email confirming receipt of the LOI will be sent within 24 hours. Applicants not receiving a confirmation email should contact Stephanie Otts at (662) 915-7714 before the closing time of the competition to determine if the LOI should be resent.

Proposal Format

Proposals are to be submitted as a single file in pdf format via email. The instructions provided below for submitting proposals must be followed. Information requested for each of the following sections must be included in the proposal. Incomplete or inappropriately prepared proposals will not be considered and may be returned.

Cover Sheet

The proposal should include a cover sheet listing the title of the proposal, PI and Co-PI names and contact information, total budget request, and a short abstract briefly summarizing the proposed research project. *The abstract is limited to **250 words**.*

Project Narrative

The maximum length for the narrative is 10 pages using a minimum of 12-point font (1-inch margins). Additional pages will not be considered, and the entire proposal rejected if the stated number of pages is exceeded. The project narrative must include the following subsections:

1. **Title**
2. **Importance and Relevance.** Justify the project's importance. Explicitly describe why it is relevant to this RFP.
3. **Research Objectives.** Detail the project's objectives.
4. **Research Approach.** Explain in detail how the research objectives will be achieved, including methods. Describe how you will collaborate with the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal adaptation policy under consideration.
5. **Expected Results.** Detail the anticipated results of this project and which specific key audiences would benefit from or apply the results.
6. **Engagement and Outreach Plan.** Detail the anticipated engagement and outreach approach. Include key audiences you plan to work with and specific outreach strategies to share results.
7. **Project Timeline.** All projects should show a 12-month timeline with a start date of July 1, 2023. Detail when key project activities and outputs would occur within the one-year project period.

Literature Cited

References required if used in the proposal; citation of literature is important to establish the familiarity and expertise of the PI to the subject in the proposal. Include full citation: name of author, title, and location in the literature (no maximum length, single-spaced).

Budget and Justification

A Budget and a Budget Justification are required. The Budget should be prepared using the standard Sea Grant 90-4 budget form available at <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Forms-and-Templates>. A narrative Budget Justification should explain and defend major expenditures. Subcontracts, if any, should have a separate budget page. A separate budget justification page is required that itemizes all budget items in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. Please pay special attention to any travel, supply, or equipment budgets and provide details.

Curriculum Vitae

The maximum length is two pages for each principal and co-principal investigator. The vitae must provide evidence of the investigator's education, qualifications, and experience in the field.

Letters of Commitment and Support

The National Sea Grant Law Center requires letters of commitment from any stated collaborators or partners providing funding support or implementing aspects of the proposed project. The Law Center requires a letter of support from the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal adaptation policy under consideration. The Law Center also encourages up to two additional letters of support from potential partners or end users that may benefit from the proposed work.

Applicant Demographics Questionnaire

After submission of full proposals, all PIs and co-PIs will be asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to help us assess the demographics of applicants to this research competition. Any PI responses will be anonymous with no linkage to their proposal submission. A response to the questionnaire is voluntary and will play no role in the funding decision-making process. Any responses received will be shared with the National Sea Grant Office.

Data Management Plan & Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire

To be recommended for funding, applicants must provide a valid environmental data management plan (or alternative statement if no data management plan is needed), as well as a completed Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (and copies of associated permits, if applicable). Additional guidance about how to provide this information will be provided to successful applicants upon notice of selection for funding.

Proposal Submission Instructions

Please combine all proposal documents into one PDF file. The proposal should be submitted to Stephanie Otts, Director of the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email at sshowalt@olemiss.edu. If you encounter technical difficulties during submission or do not receive an email response acknowledging receipt before the closing time of the competition, please contact Stephanie Otts at (662) 915-7714 as soon as possible. Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 pm Central Time on Friday, April 14, 2023.

Evaluation Procedure

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the National Sea Grant Law Center for appropriateness to the grant program. Each full proposal received will be reviewed by three external peer reviewers using the criteria set forth below. Proposals will then be reviewed, scored, and ranked by a Technical Review Panel (TRP) guided by the peer reviews and objective criteria listed below. Individuals selected to serve as peer reviewers or Technical Review Panel members will be attorneys, resource managers, academics, and Sea Grant extension agents/specialists familiar with current ocean, coastal, and marine issues free from conflict of interest. Final funding decisions will be made by the National Sea Grant Law Center Director based on the TRP scores as well as the following additional considerations: availability of funding, geographic diversity, and balance among research areas.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Rationale and innovativeness (20%). This criterion assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work. Specifically, this criterion assesses whether the research problem to be addressed is valid and significant, whether the researchers demonstrate adequate awareness of significant present or previous work, and whether the proposed study is innovative or uses novel research methods.
- Project merit, objectives, methods and feasibility (30%). This criterion assesses whether the project's proposed approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, whether there are clear project goals and objectives, the level of collaboration with the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal adaptation policy under consideration, whether the time frame is appropriate to complete the project, and whether appropriate levels of resources (budget) are dedicated to the project.

- Societal Impact (10%). This criterion assesses the degree to which the proposed research will have a positive impact on society, specifically through the advancement of coastal adaptation law and policy while considering diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and/or accessibility.
- Qualifications of the research team and results from prior work, including work funded by the National Sea Grant Law Center (if applicable) (10%). This criterion assesses whether the applicant and partners possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed activities. This criterion also evaluates whether researchers previously funded by the National Sea Grant Law Center were successful in accomplishing their prior projects.
- Strength of engagement plan (30%). This criterion assesses whether the project effectively engages key audiences and provides a focused, effective, and equitable engagement and outreach strategy. This criterion also assesses how well the project engages underserved communities in addressing coastal adaptation issues.

Deadline and Submission Information

Letters of Intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, April 14, 2023. Full proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Stephanie Otts at sshowalt@olemiss.edu.

General questions about the *Coastal Resilience Program* and the scope of projects considered should be directed to Stephanie Otts, Director of the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, sshowalt@olemiss.edu, or phone, (662) 915-7714.

Timetable

The *Coastal Resilience Program* process takes approximately six months from the request for proposals to the initiation date. The following dates provide milestones throughout the process:

RFP Released:	January 4, 2023
Letters of Intent Due:	March 1, 2023
Full Proposals Due:	April 14, 2023
Notification of Project Selection:	May 31, 2023
Award Start Date:	July 1, 2023