Request for Proposals

2027 Coastal Resilience Program

Executive Summary

Funding Source: National Sea Grant Law Center, University of Mississippi using federal funds from NOAA Sea Grant

Funding Opportunity Title: 2027 Coastal Resilience Program

Announcement Type: Notice of Request for Proposals

Timetable: Letters of Intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, January 14, 2027. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 24, 2027. The anticipated award start date is February 1, 2028.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that the National Sea Grant Law Center (Law Center) is accepting applications from eligible applicants to conduct research on the effectiveness of laws and policies related to a wide range of coastal resilience issues including sea level rise, flooding, amplified storm surge, increased frequency and intensity of storms, land use, or other environmental factors, and whether those policies are achieving desired policy changes. The *2027 Coastal Resilience Program* grants have a recommended two-year project period and funding level of $150,000, and the Law Center anticipates selecting up to two projects for funding ($75,000 per project per year). Matching funds will not be required.

Full Announcement

The Law Center is part of the National Sea Grant College Program, and is housed at the University of Mississippi School of Law. Established in 2002, the Law Center is a nationally recognized and respected resource for information on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes law. The Law Center fulfills its mission by implementing integrated legal programming based on the three legs of the Sea Grant "stool," research, education, and outreach. The Law Center strives to support the creation of new law and policy knowledge through rigorous, peer-reviewed research competitions. To that end, the Law Center requests proposals from eligible applicants to conduct research on the effectiveness of coastal resilience laws and policies. For more information about the Law Center and its work, please visit our website at http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/.

This announcement provides the following information:

1. Eligible Applicants
2. Funding Priorities
3. Funding Levels
4. Letter of Intent Format
5. Proposal Format
6. Proposal Submission Instructions
7. Evaluation Procedure
8. Evaluation Criteria
9. Deadline and Submission Information
10. Timetable

Eligible Applicants

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

Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. We encourage all eligible applicants 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 Law Center is soliciting applications for legal and policy scholars to assess the effectiveness of a discrete coastal resilience law, policy, or program. 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. There is a need for scholars and policy-makers to review the effectiveness of policies that have been adopted to inform program development and future resilience efforts. 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 existing laws and policies is also 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. Finally, a review of 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 should address the effectiveness of a single or distinct set of laws, policies, or programs related to coastal resilience. For the purposes of this competition, coastal resilience is defined as the ability of coastal environments and communities to adapt to environmental stressors. Such stressors may include sea level rise, increased flooding, amplified storm surge, more frequent and intense storms, land use changes, pollution, or other environmental factors. Projects should focus on a law, policy, or program related to the coastal areas of U.S. coastal states, including the Great Lakes states, U.S. territories and tribal lands, and whether the associated policies are achieving desired policy changes. Researchers are required to partner and engage with the relevant government entity responsible for implementing the current policy to generate new knowledge about the impact and effectiveness of coastal resilience laws and policies to achieve stated policy objectives.

The Law Center is interested in research proposals that clearly identify the coastal resilience law, policy, or program and the methodology for examining effectiveness relative to its "on-the-ground" impact (if any). The Law Center is not interested in proposals that focus solely on reviewing or analyzing the written products of coastal resilience laws, policies, or programs (e.g. plans or similar documents). Rather, the Law Center seeks to fund projects that investigate whether a discrete law, policy, or program is effectively achieving its stated coastal resilience objectives (e.g., more flood-resistant buildings, preservation of critical areas). Projects considered under this request for proposals may use a range of research methodologies to assess the effectiveness of the identified law, policy, or program. Research teams are encouraged to provide opportunities for graduate or law student involvement in appropriate aspects of the proposed project activities. Please see the Law Center's Funded Project webpage for an overview of projects funded through previous Coastal Resilience Program competitions: https://nsglc.olemiss.edu/funding/current-past-projects/index.html.

In addition to supporting research projects that are academically rigorous and societally relevant, the 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 under investigation will be involved in each phase of the research project to ensure that the research question and results are relevant and usable to decision-makers. Engagement with additional audiences, such as other government entities and community organizations, is encouraged and may occur beyond the required government entity partnership.

Funding Levels

The *Coastal Resilience Program* grants have a recommended funding level of $150,000, and the Law Center anticipates selecting up to two projects for funding ($75,000 per project per year). Matching funds will not be required.

Letters of Intent Format

To be eligible to submit a full proposal, a Letter of Intent (LOI) is required. LOIs will help the 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 Law Center's feedback, any applicant that submits an eligible LOI may submit a full proposal.

The LOI (maximum of two pages, excluding CVs) shall consist of the following:

1. Anticipated title of the proposed project.
2. Expected project duration (all projects should show a 24-month duration with an anticipated start date of February 1, 2028).
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.
8. Full name, title, and contact information (email) for three individuals who are especially well qualified to review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Law Center's discretion. Suggested reviewers will not be assigned to the applicant's proposal to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Please combine all LOI documents into one PDF file. The LOI should be submitted to Lauren Fremin, Project Coordinator for the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, lrfremin@olemiss.edu. If you experience technical difficulties during submission or do not receive an email confirmation acknowledging receipt within 24 hours of the LOI deadline, please contact Lauren Fremin at (662) 915-7187 as soon as possible. Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 pm Central Time on **Thursday, January 14, 2027**.

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. Proposals that are missing required elements listed below, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review. The Law Center in its sole discretion may continue review of those applications with minor deficiencies that may be easily cured.

Changes in lead investigator or lead institution post-LOI submission are permitted if the original PI remains on the team with no major changes in the scope of the project.

Cover Page
The proposal should include a cover page listing the title of the proposal, PI and Co-PI names, titles, affiliations, and contact information of the PI and any Co-PIs.

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 cover page, CVs, literature cited, letters, and supplementary forms are excluded from the 10-page Project Narrative limit.* The project narrative must include the following subsections:

1. **Project Abstract.** Provide a general summary of the purpose of the project, activities to be performed, expected outcomes, and intended beneficiaries (limit 500 words).
2. **Project Background.** Explain the specific opportunities and challenges this project seeks to address and justify its importance. Applicants should clearly identify:
    a. The coastal resilience law, policy, or program to be examined.
    b. The history and significance of this identified law, policy, or program.
    c. The need for the proposed analysis, including how it builds on or addresses gaps in the existing literature.
    d. The relevance of the proposed analysis to this RFP.
3. **Project Objectives.** Provide a list of clearly defined objectives and how those objectives align with goals and priorities of this RFP.
4. **Project Details.** Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives. Applicants must clearly describe the methodology that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the identified coastal resilience law, policy, or program and explain how various components of the research project will be conducted. Applicants must also explicitly describe how they will collaborate with the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal resilience policy under consideration.
5. **Anticipated Outcomes and Results.** Detail the anticipated results of this project and which specific key audiences would benefit from or apply the results.

6. **Project Timeline.** All projects should show a 24-month timeline with a start date of February 1, 2028. Detail when key project activities and outputs would occur within the two-year project period.
7. **Engagement and Outreach Plan.** Detail the anticipated engagement and outreach approach. Applicants should identify key target audiences and the specific outreach strategies that will be used to reach them, and clearly outline how research findings will be accessible and usable to key audiences. As stated above, research teams are required to engage the government entity responsible for implementing the policy under investigation in all phases of the research project. The engagement and outreach plan therefore must identify key audiences beyond the partner government agency. Examples of engagement activities could include formation of advisory groups, dissemination of non-technical summaries of research findings, webinar series, and presentations at relevant state and local conferences. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include sufficient funds in the budget for the outreach and engagement component, as applicable. *Publication of results in academic journals alone is insufficient evidence of a successful outreach and engagement strategy*.

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.

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).

Letters of Commitment and Support
The Law Center requires letters of commitment from any named collaborators or partners providing direct funding support or with responsibility for implementing key aspects of the proposed project. Letters of commitment are not required from collaborators or partners serving on advisory committees or contributing expertise through similar means.

In addition, the Law Center requires a letter of support from the government entity partner that will be engaged in the project and is responsible for implementing the coastal resilience 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.

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). The Data Management Plan and Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire are not required at the time of submission of the full proposal. Additional guidance about how to provide this information will be provided to successful applicants upon notice of selection for funding.

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 on the Law Center's funding page at https://nsglc.olemiss.edu/funding/index.html. The narrative Budget Justification should itemize and explain 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 promotional budgets and provide details. Subcontracts, if any, should have a separate budget page and justification.

Applicants may include indirect (F&A) costs in their budget at their institution's federally negotiated appropriate rate for the activity proposed.

Proposal Submission Instructions

Please combine all proposal documents into one PDF file. The proposal should be submitted to Lauren Fremin, Project Coordinator for the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, lrfremin@olemiss.edu. If you experience technical difficulties during submission or do not receive an email confirmation acknowledging receipt within 24 hours of the competition's closing time, please contact Lauren Fremin at (662) 915-7187 as soon as possible. Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 pm Central Time on **Wednesday, March 24, 2027**.

Evaluation Procedure

LOIs will be reviewed by the 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 TRP 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.

The Law Center will conduct a final review of the proposals, taking into account the TRP's recommendations and advice. The Law Center Director has final discretion to select research projects, based on the panel's recommendations, topical and geographic diversity and balance of proposals, availability of funding, and alignment with programmatic objectives, needs and priorities.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Rationale (20%)**. This criterion assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work. Specifically, this criterion assesses whether a discrete coastal resilience law, policy, or program is clearly identified, whether the research question is valid and significant, whether the researchers demonstrate adequate awareness of significant present or previous work.
- **Project merit, objectives, methods and feasibility (30%)**. This criterion assesses whether the project's proposed approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate and likely to achieve desired results, whether there are clear project goals and objectives tied to the overall goals of this research competition (i.e., assessing the effectiveness of coastal resilience policies), the level of collaboration with the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal resilience 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.
- **Potential 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 resilience law and policy. This criterion also assesses the extent to which the project provides opportunities for law student or other graduate student involvement.
- **Qualifications of the research team and results from prior work (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 assessment will be primarily based on the investigator(s) curriculum vita(s). 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 how well the proposal identifies and engages key audiences and end users of the research, and whether it provides a focused and effective engagement and outreach strategy.

Deadline and Submission Information

LOIs must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, January 14, 2027. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 24, 2027. Full proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Lauren Fremin at lrfremin@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. General questions about the application process should be directed to Lauren Fremin, Project Coordinator for the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, lrfremin@olemiss.edu.

The Law Center has a FAQ document available on our website at https://nsglc.olemiss.edu/funding/index.html. We strongly encourage applicants to review this document before reaching out with questions via email.

Timetable

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

RFP Released:	November 16, 2026
Letters of Intent Due:	January 14, 2027
Full Proposals Due:	March 24, 2027
Notification of Project Selection:	June 24, 2027
Award Start Date:	February 1, 2028