

Request for Proposals

2022 Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship Program

Executive Summary

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship Program

Announcement Type: Notice of Request for Proposals

Timetable: Letters of intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 25, 2022. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, July 6, 2022. The anticipated award start date is February 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 Sea Grant Programs to serve as host offices for postgraduate Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellows. The *Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship* grants have a maximum award level of \$20,000. The National Sea Grant Law Center anticipates sufficient funding to make three 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/>). One of the National Sea Grant Law Center's primary responsibilities as identified by the National Sea Grant Office is "to serve as a focal point for Sea Grant's law-related issues and promote the growth and development of a Sea Grant legal network." As part of its effort to fulfill this responsibility, the National Sea Grant Law Center strives to "increase the capacity of individual Sea Grant programs to address ocean and coastal legal issues in their respective states." (NSGLC 2018-2023 Strategic Plan Objective 3). Towards that end, the National Sea Grant Law Center requests proposals from Sea Grant Programs to serve as host offices for postgraduate Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellows.

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. Deadline and Submission Information
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Eligible Applicants

The National Sea Grant Law Center welcomes proposals from Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs. For the remainder of the document, these entities are collectively referred to as “Sea Grant Programs.” Only those Sea Grant Programs who submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by the required deadline are subsequently eligible to submit full proposals. An application to serve as a host office must come from a Sea Grant Program, but the fellow does not have to be housed within the Sea Grant program (see Funding Priorities below for more information).

Funding Priorities

The National Sea Grant Law Center is soliciting applications from Sea Grant Programs to serve as host offices for postgraduate Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellows. The primary purpose of the National Sea Grant Law Center’s *Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship Program* is to support and generate stakeholder-driven legal research to address Sea Grant program needs. Fellows are expected to spend at least 80% of their time on research. The remaining 20% of their time may be spent on professional development and outreach activities.

Host offices are responsible for developing and proposing a rigorous and timely legal research project for the fellow to complete during the course of the fellowship. Some examples of potential projects include drafting research or policy briefs on discrete topics of importance to the host Sea Grant program, analyzing state legal frameworks to address stakeholder questions, and conducting multi-state surveys to compare legal regimes. The research project must be described in the application in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of its relevance and

professional merit during the proposal review process. A final research plan, jointly developed by the host and the fellow, must be submitted by the host office by the end of the first month of the fellowship (i.e., March 2023).

During their fellowship year, fellows will be required to write and submit an article related to their research project for publication in a special edition of National Sea Grant Law Center's *Sea Grant Law & Policy Journal*. Fellows will be expected to present their research at a virtual research symposium organized and hosted by the National Sea Grant Law Center. Fellows would also be encouraged to adapt their articles for publication in other journals. A fellow, for example, may wish to publish a more in-depth doctrinal article on their research topic in a traditional legal journal. The National Sea Grant Law Center will offer guidance and support to fellows regarding the publication process.

The National Sea Grant Law Center's preferred placement is for the fellow to be embedded within a Sea Grant program to facilitate mentoring and direct exposure to Sea Grant programming. However, there may be situations when placement of the fellow at a law school or partner organization is desirable for institutional or strategic reasons, including the ability of the fellow to access a law library and/or subscriptions to legal databases (Westlaw/Lexis). The rationale for the selection of the host office location and placement should be clearly articulated in the proposal.

The host offices are expected to supervise, mentor, and provide opportunities for involvement in substantive issues that support the fellow's research objectives during the fellowship and overall professional goals. The fellow will be expected to work full-time and engage with Sea Grant leadership/staff and partners as desired and appropriate. Hosts are responsible for hiring the fellows and structuring the fellowship (remote/virtual, on-site, and hybrid arrangements) as desired and as permitted by their respective institutions.

As a secondary purpose of the fellowship program is to train the next generation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes attorneys, the National Sea Grant Law Center will provide and facilitate professional development, mentoring, and networking opportunities for the entire cohort of fellows. The National Sea Grant Law Center will host monthly check-in calls for the fellows which will include mentoring and professional development activities. The National Sea Grant Law Center will also encourage fellows to become involved in Sea Grant Legal Network calls and activities and write for National Sea Grant Law Center publications (e.g., *The SandBar*, NSGLC blog).

Funding Levels

The maximum funding request for the *Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship* grants is \$20,000. Matching funds are not required, but applicants must document the additional sources of internal or external funding that will be used to support the full costs of the research fellowship which will vary depending on host office (estimated at \$60,000 - \$80,000 per year, exclusive of IDC). The National Sea Grant Law Center anticipates selecting a total of three hosts in 2022.

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 *Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship Program*. Regardless of the National Sea Grant Law Center's feedback, any applicant that submits an eligible LOI can submit a full proposal.

The LOI (max. 1 page) shall consist of the following:

- Detailed contact information for the lead PI – Name; Title and Position; Department; Mailing Address; Phone; Email;
- Brief statement of the Sea Grant Program's interest and qualifications to serve as a host office.
- Brief summary of the proposed research project.
- Identification of relevant institutional partners or collaborators.

The LOI must be submitted via email to Stephanie Otts, sshowalt@olemiss.edu, no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 25, 2022. 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. Late or incomplete proposals will not be

considered without documentation of extenuating circumstances, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Cover Sheet

The proposal should include a cover sheet listing the title of the proposal, name and contact information for the Principal Investigator, primary point of contact for the fellowship program (if different than the PI), fellowship placement location, name of fellowship supervisor(s), and a short abstract briefly describing the qualifications of the Sea Grant Program to serve as a host office and the proposed research project. *The abstract is limited to **250 words**.*

Project Narrative

The maximum length for the narrative is five 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: statement of interest, research project, recruitment and hiring process, and sources of financial support.

1. **Statement of Interest.** Describe the applicant's interest and qualifications to serve as a host office. Specifically, applicants should discuss (1) previous experience working with and mentoring postgraduate fellows and (2) how the fellowship will support efforts of the Sea Grant Program to build its legal capacity.
2. **Research Project.** Provide a description of the proposed legal research project that clearly articulates the significance, relevance, timeliness, and benefits of the project to stakeholders.
3. **Fellowship Structure and Location.** Describe the institutional structure and location of the fellowship placement. Specifically, applicants should discuss (1) the institutional "home" for the fellowship position, (2) what office space, equipment, and supplies will be provided to the fellow and where, (3) the research resources available to the fellow (e.g., access to law library or legal databases), and (4) how the fellow will be supervised and mentored.
4. **Recruitment and Hiring Process.** Outline the process the host office will use to recruit and hire the fellow if selected for funding. Applicants should discuss their recruitment strategy to reach a diverse pool of candidates.
5. **Financial Support.** *Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship* awards are limited to \$20,000. Applicants should provide an estimate of the full costs of the fellowship (e.g., salary, fringe benefits, materials/supplies) and outline their plan for fully funding the fellowship. A letter of commitment should be included from any external partner (e.g., law school, state agency) pledging financial support.

6. **Project Duration.** All projects should show a 12-month timeline with a start date of February 1, 2023. Host offices wishing to structure the fellowship as a two-year position should indicate that desire in their application. Host offices must compete for funding on an annual basis, but may apply to extend a fellowship for a second year.

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.

Funding will be provided to selected Sea Grant Programs through an amendment to an omnibus award. Following award notification, the Sea Grant Program will be required to submit a proposal to the National Sea Grant Office via Grants.gov to initiate the funding process. The National Sea Grant Law Center will work with selected programs to reduce administrative burdens.

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 also encourages up to three letters of support from potential partners or stakeholders that may benefit from the proposed work.

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, 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 Wednesday, July 7, 2022.

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. 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 Great Lakes issues. Selection of proposals for funding shall occur in 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 geographically;
- Balance/distribution of funds among Sea Grant Programs with and without existing legal capacity;
- Applicant's prior award performance.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The quality of the fellowship opportunity. (30%)
 - Degree of engagement with Sea Grant Program leadership and staff.
 - Degree to which administrative and professional development support will be provided.
 - Degree to which the fellow will have access to legal research resources and other research support.
- The quality, rationale, and professional merit of the proposed research project. (40%)
 - Degree to which the applicant has identified an important and compelling research topic.
 - Degree to which the research methods and objectives are clearly stated.
 - Degree to which the proposed project will contribute to addressing an identified legal research need in the state.
 - Degree to which the proposed project can be completed within the timeline of the one-year fellowship.
- The host Sea Grant program's previous experience working with postgraduate fellows or other postgraduate mentoring/educational programs. (10%)
- The strength and reasonableness of the applicant's financial plan for securing sufficient funding for full costs of fellowship (20%).

Deadline and Submission Information

Letters of Intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 25, 2022. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, July 6, 2022. Full proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Stephanie Otts at sshowalt@olemiss.edu.

General questions about the *Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship 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 *National Sea Grant Law Center Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Law Research Fellowship Program* process takes approximately six months from the request for proposals to the notification of project selection. The following dates provide milestones throughout the process:

RFP Released:	April 5, 2022
Letters of Intent Due:	May 25, 2022
Full Proposals Due:	July 6, 2022
Notification of Project Selection:	September 1, 2022
Award and Fellowship Start Date:	February 1, 2023