

Request for Proposals

National Sea Grant Law Center Small Grants Program 2020

Executive Summary

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

Funding Opportunity Title: National Sea Grant Law Center Small Grants Program 2020

Announcement Type: Notice of Request for Proposals

Timetable: Letters of intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, September 18, 2020. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, October 30, 2020.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that the National Sea Grant Law Center is accepting proposals for one-year projects to promote the growth and development of Sea Grant legal programming and build the capacity of individual Sea Grant programs to address legal issues in their states. The Sea Grant Legal Program Enhancement Grants have a maximum award level of \$50,000. Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Grants are limited to \$20,000. Matching funds are not required.

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, 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 requests proposals to meet the following two objectives:

- Support the efforts of Sea Grant programs with existing legal capacity to engage in regional work or work collaboratively to address national legal research, extension, and education needs.
- Support the efforts of Sea Grant programs without existing legal capacity to build such capacity to address legal research, extension, and education needs in their respective states.

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
9. Timetable

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.

Funding Priorities

The Law Center is soliciting proposals for two types of awards: “Sea Grant Legal Program Enhancement Grants” and “Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Grants.”

Sea Grant Legal Program Enhancement Grants

Sea Grant Programs with existing legal capacity (e.g., a state Sea Grant-supported legal program or project) are eligible to apply for “Sea Grant Legal Program Enhancement Grants.” Sea Grant Legal Program Enhancements Grants will provide funding to support the efforts of existing Sea Grant legal programs and projects to engage in regional work or work collaboratively to address national legal research, extension, and education needs related to one or more of the National Sea Grant College Program strategic focus areas (Healthy Coastal Ecosystems, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, Resilient Communities and Economies, and Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development).

To be eligible for funding, proposals for regional projects must (1) address issues of regional scale that are also relevant to the applicant’s home state; (2) clearly identify at least one regional partner (i.e., an organization or entity that works at the regional scale); and (3) clearly describe mechanisms for regional interaction and coordination among stakeholders.

To be eligible for funding, proposals for national projects must (1) involve a collaboration of two or more members of the Sea Grant Legal Network; (2) focus on a legal topic not currently being addressed by the National Sea Grant Law Center; and (3) result in the development of resources that can be utilized by extension agents, educators, communicators, and other members of the Sea Grant network.

Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Grants

Sea Grant Programs without existing legal capacity are eligible to apply for “Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Grants.” These grants will provide funding to Sea Grant Programs to explore or strengthen institutional partnerships to develop legal programs or provide legal programming in their states. Sea Grant legal programs can take many forms, and Sea Grant Programs without legal expertise on staff may need assistance with identifying or approaching potential partners. Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Grants will therefore be funded through an annual, two-phase grant program.

Capacity Building Phase I grants will provide funding to Sea Grant Programs to develop a “proof of concept” proposal to build legal capacity in their state in partnership with the National Sea Grant Law Center. Successful applicants will receive guidance and support from the National Sea Grant Law Center in the development of their “proof of concept” proposal, including assistance with identification of potential partners, organizational structure and funding models, and projects. Funding may be used to support preliminary research and other activities necessary for the launch of a new program or initiative, including needs assessments, travel to meet with potential partners, travel support to facilitate information sharing from existing legal programs, and pilot workshops or events. The required deliverable from a Phase I grant is a final report outlining the Sea Grant Program’s “proof of concept” proposal.

Sea Grant Programs who satisfactorily complete a Phase I grant will be eligible to apply for Phase II funding. Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Phase II grants will provide funding for Sea Grant Programs to implement a legal research, outreach, and education activity as identified in their “proof of concept” proposal.

As a condition of funding, recipients of either type of award (Enhancement Grant or Capacity Building Grant) will be required to present research results in-person at a conference organized by the National Sea Grant Law Center or other appropriate national Sea Grant network meetings, such as Sea Grant Week, as identified by the National Sea Grant Law Center. If a grant recipient is unable to attend the selected conference, research results must be presented as part of the National Sea Grant Law Center’s webinar series. Recipients will also be required to contribute an article about their project to a special issue of the *Sea Grant Law and Policy Journal*.

Funding Levels

The maximum funding request for the Sea Grant Legal Program Enhancement Grants is \$50,000, including all facilities and administrative costs (F&A). The maximum funding request for the Sea Grant Legal Capacity Building Grants is \$20,000, including all F&A costs. The National Sea Grant Law Center anticipates selecting a total of three to four projects in 2020.

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 proposed projects to the *National Sea Grant Law Center Small Grants 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 shall consist of the following:

- Brief (1-page) project summary describing the project’s objectives with emphasis on how the project will address the funding priorities identified above.
- Detailed contact information for the lead PI – Name; Title and Position; Department; Mailing Address; Phone; Email;
- Names, titles, and affiliations of other investigators and collaborators.
- Total amount of funding requested and preliminary budget.

The LOI must be submitted via e-mail to Stephanie Otts, sshowalt@olemiss.edu, no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time on Friday, September 18, 2020. 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 in pdf format via email. The instructions provided below for submitting proposals must be followed. Information requested for each of the following sections identified 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, name and contact information for the Principal Investigator, names of any co-investigators, total budget request, and a short abstract briefly describing the project's objectives with emphasis on how the project will address the identified funding priorities. 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 narrative should provide a brief description of the work being proposed while clearly stating the significance, relevance, timeliness, and benefits of the project. The project narrative must include the following subsections: rationale, objectives, approach, expected results, and project duration. A description of the required contents of each of these subsections is provided below:

1. **Rationale and Professional Merit.** Describe the need for the proposed project and how the proposed work will advance the National Sea Grant Law Center's stated objectives and funding priorities. Specifically, applicants should describe how the proposed activity with either (1) enhance existing Sea Grant legal programming or (2) build new legal capacity.
2. **Objectives.** List the objectives of the proposed project. Include a brief statement on the context of the proposed activity in relation to other related work or programming.
3. **Approach.** Outline methods, approaches, and techniques that will be used to meet the stated objectives.
4. **Expected Results.** Describe the deliverables, accomplishments, and other results anticipated to be achieved during the project. Proposed deliverables must include a presentation at a National Sea Grant Law Center symposium or related event and an article submitted for publication in the *Sea Grant Law and Policy Journal*.
5. **Project Duration.** All projects should show a 12-month timeline with a start date of February 1, 2021.

Literature Cited

References required if used 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

A Curriculum Vitae is required for each principal and co-principal investigator. The **maximum length is two pages**. 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 services 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 combined 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 Friday, October 30, 2020.

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 marine issues. Final funding decisions will be made by the National Sea Grant Law Center based on the TRP scores as well as additional considerations, including geographic diversity and balance among thematic areas and type of awards.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following seven criteria.

1. **Rationale** - the degree to which the proposed activity addresses the stated funding priorities; the degree to which the need for and relevance of the proposed activity is demonstrated.
2. **Professional Merit** – technical and practical soundness of the approach; likelihood that the proposed project will advance the National Sea Grant Law Center’s stated objectives to build legal capacity and enhance legal programming within the Sea Grant network.
3. **Innovativeness** - the degree to which new approaches to providing legal research, outreach, and education services will be employed; alternatively, the degree to which the activity will focus on new types of collaboration or partnership models.
4. **Qualifications and Past Record of Investigators** - degree to which investigators are qualified by education, training, experience and institutional position to execute the proposed activity; record of achievement with previous funding.
5. **User Relationships** - degree to which users or potential users of the results of the proposed activity have been brought into the planning of the activity, will be brought into the execution of the activity, or will be kept apprised of progress and results.
6. **Relationship to Sea Grant Priorities** - degree to which the proposed activity relates to strategic priorities of the National Sea Grant College Program and the state Sea Grant Program.
7. **Programmatic Justification** - the degree to which the proposed activity will address the needs of important state, regional, or national constituencies.

The weighting of the criteria is as follows:

- **Rationale, Professional Merit, and Innovativeness:** 60%
- **Investigator Qualifications:** 10%
- **User Relationships:** 10%
- **Relationship to Sea Grant Priorities and Programmatic Justification:** 20%

Deadline and Submission Information

Letters of intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, September 18, 2020. Letters of intent should be submitted in PDF format via email to Stephanie Otts at sshowalt@olemiss.edu.

Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, October 30, 2020. Full proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Stephanie Otts at sshowalt@olemiss.edu.

General questions about the grant competition 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) 915-77714.

Timetable

The *National Sea Grant Law Center Small Grants Program 2020* process takes approximately six months from the request for proposals to the initiation date. The following dates provide milestones throughout the process:

Letters of Intent due:	September 18, 2020
Feedback on LOIs:	September 24, 2020
Full Proposals due:	October 30, 2020
Notification of Project Selection:	December 18, 2020
Project Initiation:	February 1, 2021