Fiscal Year 2022 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics

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NOTICE OF 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 2022 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007042

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

Dates: Eligible interested students must submit application materials by 5:00 PM, local time on January 27, 2022 to eligible Sea Grant programs. Interested students enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant program must submit to that program. Other interested students must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the NMFS-SG Fellowship Program Manager listed in Section VII. LOIs should be submitted from eligible Sea Grant programs via email to the NSGO Fellowship Program Managers (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on Thursday, February 10, 2022. Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant program are to be received and validated in Grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on February 24, 2022. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. ET). The application submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program by the interested student must be submitted to Grants.gov unchanged.

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

This notice announces that applications may be submitted for the 2022 NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics. When an interested student is applying, be sure to specify your project’s focus area in your title page: either Population and Ecosystem Dynamics (PED), or Marine Resource Economics (MRE). See Section IV.B, Content and Form of Application, for more information.

Population and Ecosystem Dynamics: Sea Grant anticipates funding at least four new Ph.D. fellowships in 2022 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. 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.

Marine Resource Economics: Sea Grant anticipates funding one new Ph.D. fellowship in 2022 to students who are interested in careers related to the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources.

Fellows will work on thesis problems of public interest and relevance to the 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 and Marine Resource Economics meets NOAA's healthy oceans goal of "marine fisheries, habitats, biodiversity sustained with healthy and productive ecosystems."

Application packages may propose up to $54,166 in federal funding plus at least 20% matching funding per year. These awards will be jointly funded by NMFS and Sea Grant. These fellowships can provide support for up to three years.

Interested students are strongly encouraged to reach out to the Sea Grant program in their state/territory at least one month prior to the state application deadline to receive application support
and provide notification of intent to apply.

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007042. Additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application are provided in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document available at
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf

New NOFO Requirements:
Section IV.B - Content and Form of Application has been revised from previous years. There are additional application submission requirements that must be met.
Section V.A - Evaluation Criteria has been revised from previous years. New evaluation criteria are included and must be used during application review events at both the program and national levels.
Questions on the new requirements should be directed to the NMFS Fellowship Program Manager.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) support Ph.D. graduate fellowships in two specific areas (1) population and ecosystem dynamics (PED) and (2) marine resource economics (MRE). The intent of this opportunity is to award a limited number of fellowships each year to students who are interested in careers related to population and ecosystem dynamics and marine resource economics with applications to living marine resources.

Student 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; 5) ecosystem-based management of marine ecosystems; and 6) economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources.

The fellowship 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, simulation modeling, marine resource economics, natural resource economics, or environmental economics.

If selected, each fellow will be required to work closely with an expert (mentor) from NMFS who may provide data for a fellow's thesis, serve on the fellow's committee, and/or host an annual summer internship at the participating NMFS facility. Mentors will be from participating NMFS Science Centers or offices.

B. Program Priorities

Sea Grant is seeking applications for its fellowship programs to fulfill its broad educational responsibilities, enhance workforce development, and to strengthen the collaboration between Sea Grant and the NMFS. Selected 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."

The goals of the program are to 1) encourage qualified students to pursue careers in population and ecosystem dynamics related to living marine resources; 2) encourage qualified students to pursue careers in marine resource economics; 3) increase available expertise related to quantitative ecology for systems of living marine resources; 4) increase available expertise related to the economic analysis of living marine resource conservation and management decisions; 5) foster closer relationships between academic scientists and NMFS; and 6) provide real-world experience to graduate students and accelerate their career development; and 7) support graduate students from diverse backgrounds with an interest in population dynamics or marine resource economics.

For those interested students with population and ecosystem dynamics topics: 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.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under the National Sea Grant College Program Act of 1966, as amended (33 USC 1121 et seq.).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to the availability of funding, the fellowship program expects to award at least four new Ph.D. fellowships to students who are interested in careers related to population and ecosystem dynamics of living marine resources and/or marine ecosystem dynamics, and at least one new Ph.D. fellowship to students who are interested in careers related to marine resource economics.

The award for each fellowship will be a multi-year cooperative agreement in an amount not to exceed $54,166 in federal funds per year for up to three years. Matching funds of 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 grantee.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is August 1, 2022, with projects to be completed by July 31, 2025.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

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 fellows. 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 their 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

Full applications submitted to Grants.gov must come from an eligible Sea Grant program. Prospective fellows enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant program must submit to that program. Applications that are not approved and submitted by the student’s state Sea Grant program will not be considered for review.

Those eligible to submit to a Sea Grant Program:

1) Prospective fellows must be United States citizens.
2) At the time of application, prospective fellows must be admitted to a Ph.D. degree program at a U.S. accredited university in the U.S. in population dynamics, ecosystem dynamics, resource or environmental economics, 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.
3) Alternatively, a prospective fellow may submit a signed letter from the institution indicating provisional acceptance to a Ph.D. degree program conditional on obtaining financial support such as this fellowship.

Interested students 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 listed in section VII.

Sea Grant champions diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), working to create a marine science workforce that reflects the communities we serve. We are 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, 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 (20%) of the federal funding request must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted, such as the waiver for insular areas granted by the Department of Commerce pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a. 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 $54,166 in federal funds is requested (the maximum allowable annual request), matching funds must be at least $10,834. In other words, applicants may not ‘under’ match in year one and ‘over’ match in year two. In-kind contributions directly supporting this application may count towards this matching requirement. See the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document (https://seagrant.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 Grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007042. If an eligible Sea Grant program does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Interested students enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory not served by a Sea Grant program must first contact the agency contact listed in Section VII to obtain a written referral to an eligible Sea Grant program. This referral must be included in the application package.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to include these elements will result in rejection of the application without review.

Letters of Intent Required Elements:

Letters of Intent (LOIs) will be requested in advance of final proposal submission to allow the NSGO to gauge the number of expected applications to be submitted by the Sea Grant Programs. LOIs should be received via email by the NSGO Fellowship Program Managers (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on Thursday, February 10, 2022.

Letters of Intent should provide the following information:
1) Sea Grant Applicant Information (spreadsheet/table)
-- A table of all applications received by the state program including, Student Name, Student's Academic Institution, Degree the student is seeking.
2) Summary of the State Review Process (one page max)
-- A brief discussion of the recruitment process focusing on how programs engaged diverse schools and audiences.

Programs will receive email confirmation of LOI receipt by COB Friday, February 11, 2022.

Full Application Required Elements:

Applications must include the following documents:

a) Project Proposal Narrative
The project proposal narrative must contain nine sub-elements. The following sub-elements are to be submitted by the student to the eligible Sea Grant program:

(1) Title page: The title page must not exceed one page. It should include the name and contact information of the prospective fellow, the title of the proposal, a brief project abstract, and should specify your project's focus area (either PED or MRE). Depending on the student's research /concentration, the proposal title should read either "Last name_PED" or "Last name_MRE" as a prefix.

(2) 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:
- the number of years for which fellowship support is being sought;
- a brief summary of the work to be completed;
- a rationale for the proposed activity;
- scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested;
- appropriate details on methodology, and relevance of results

Candidate projects will focus on at least one of the following: 1) the population dynamics of living marine resources; 2) stock assessment and survey methodologies; 3) marine ecosystem modeling; 4) integrated ecosystem assessments; 5) ecosystem-based management of marine ecosystems; and 6) economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources. Interdisciplinary topics are encouraged.

The proposal itself must not exceed five pages single spaced. If a proposal is longer than five pages, only the first five will be shared with reviewers. References and figures should be included as an appendix and do not count towards the five page limit.

(3) Education and career goal statement from the student: The statement should discuss the student's interest in:
the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources, and/or quantitative marine ecology, with a focus on one or more of the following:

- development and implementation of methods for assessing marine ecosystems and/or stock status of living marine resources;
- ecosystem-based management;
- population dynamics of managed aquatic animals;
- quantitative survey methodologies;
- commitment to apply scientific expertise to serve society equitably (consider academics, volunteer activities, professional activities or personal experiences).

The statement must not exceed two pages single spaced. If a career goal statement is longer than two pages, only the first two pages will be shared with reviewers.

(4) Curriculum vitae (CV): The student, the faculty advisor, and the NMFS mentor must each submit a CV which is not to exceed 2 pages. The CVs should not include personal contact information or web links to external resources (e.g., LinkedIn, articles, blogs, etc.). If

included, programs should redact excess materials prior to submission to Grants.gov. If a CV is longer than two pages, only the first two pages will be shared with reviewers.

(5) Summary of academic training in quantitative methods: Provide a one-page single spaced maximum summary describing 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 2022 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.

(6) Clear copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts. These copies may be either official or unofficial transcripts. For students who have been accepted but not yet enrolled in a current Ph.D. program, the program's acceptance letter is adequate to fill the requirement of Ph.D. transcripts.

(7) A minimum of two signed letters of recommendation from:
- The student's faculty advisor. The letters should discuss the following attributes of the student: quantitative skills, self-motivation, response to setbacks, skills and involvement in teamwork, academic and performance and/or potential.
- The student's NMFS mentor. In addition to noting the NMFS staff member's commitment to serve as a mentor, letters from NMFS mentors should briefly address the relevance of the research to NMFS, as well as a statement of broader impacts of the proposal.

If multiple advisors or mentors are contributing, each one should provide a separate letter.

(8) Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538): The Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, guidance on how to complete the questionnaire, as well as examples of completed questionnaires, can be found here: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation. Student must ensure that the questionnaires are completed in full and include detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information. If detailed information is not provided, NOAA via the federal program officer, may request additional information or place a specific award condition on the fellowship award prohibiting specific activities, if permits or other environmental compliance documentation is not currently available.

(9) Data Management Plan: A data sharing plan not to exceed two pages is required. 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

b) Budget Justification
A budget justification for each year of the 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 with the Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate.

The budget should include funds for travel to the annual Fellows Symposium and may include funds for stipend, tuition, fees, equipment, supplies, discretionary travel, and other reasonable and appropriate project costs (see Section II, "Award Information"). Sub-contracts, if any, should have a separate budget page.

3. Overall Application

In addition to the forms required above, the following 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 (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation).

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, 2022-July 31, 2025), as well as the federal funding amount being requested 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 “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs,” must describe the proposed yearly funding 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 with separate columns for each year of federal dollars and each year of match dollars. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).

c) Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B
Section B of the SF-424A form described above only includes space to report the applicant’s yearly federal dollars and non-federal dollars over two years. If the application includes more than two years of federal and non-federal dollars, please 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). This form is an outlier and will be added to the "Budget Narrative Attachment" section on Grants.gov, as described in Section IV. C. 2.

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) [optional form, include if applicable]
This form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," is an optional form and should be included if appropriate. If included, it must be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

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, 31 U.S.C. § 6101 note, 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 § pt 25, which may be accessed at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Eligible students must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on January 27, 2022 to the appropriate Sea Grant program. Students enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant program must submit to that program. Other students must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the NMFS-SG Fellowship Program Manager as listed in Section VII.

Sea Grant Programs should submit LOIs via email to the NSGO Fellowship Program

Managers (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on Thursday, February 10, 2022.

Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant program are to be received and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on February 24, 2022. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. ET.) The sub-elements submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program by the applicant must be submitted to Grants.gov unchanged.

Please note: Validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Eligible Sea Grant programs should consider this process in developing their submission timeline. For eligible Sea Grant program applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

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 C.F.R. § 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships").

G. Other Submission Requirements

Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant program must be submitted electronically to Grants.gov by the application deadline. 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

For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics the evaluation criteria are as follows:

(1) Quality of project and applicability to program priorities. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship, the project summary should provide evidence of important and innovative

research and relate that research to relevant agency priorities (30 points). The point scale is as follows: The project summary is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-10 points); the project summary adequately addresses expectations outlined below (11-20 points); the project summary exceeds expectations outlined below (21-30 points).
- The project description provides a clear rationale for why the work is important and innovative research;
- There is a clear scientific or technical objective and/or hypotheses being tested;
- The discussed methodology and relevance of results are appropriate for the proposed research and time frame;
- The project is relevant to agency (NOAA) priorities.

(2) Relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; honors and awards; and interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills (20 Points). For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship the curriculum vitae, career goal statement, and summary of academic training in quantitative methods should demonstrate the experiences of the student as they relate to marine or aquatic related fields. The point scale is as follows: the relevant experience is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-6 points); the relevant experience adequately addresses expectations outlined below (7-13 points); the relevant experience exceeds expectations outlined below (14-20 points).
- The student demonstrates interpersonal, written, or oral communication skills;
- The student clearly discusses an interest in the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources or quantitative marine ecology;
- The experiences of the student provide them with the foundation for success in the academic space;
- The student has shown interest in working with diverse stakeholders;
- The student’s experience demonstrates a commitment to apply scientific expertise to serve society equitably
- The student has shown interest in working with diverse collaborators, community members and/or interested partners.

(3) Academic record as it relates to quantitative coursework and related fields. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship the academic record is evaluated using student transcripts (undergraduate and graduate), the summary of academic training in quantitative methods, and the curriculum vitae (CV) (20 Points). The point scale is as follows: The academic record is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-6 points); the academic record adequately addresses expectations outlined below (7-13 points); the academic record exceeds expectations outlined below (14-20 points).
- The education and experience in the student’s area of expertise are appropriate to the career

stage;
- The transcript and academic training demonstrate quantitative coursework;
- The student displays strength in academic performance and competitive course grades;
- Records of publications and/or presentations (academic or non-academic) are appropriate to the career stage, field, and institutional settings.

(4) Recommendations and/or endorsements of the student. For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship in Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics, the expertise of the major professor and proposed NMFS mentor will be taken into account (20 points total).

Academic Advisor Letter(s) (10 Points of 20 points): The point scale is as follows: the advisor letter is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the advisor letter adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the advisor letter exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
- The letter writer(s) demonstrate knowledge of the student and their academic abilities and/or potential;
- The letter writer(s) speak to the leadership potential, confidence, maturity, and self-direction of the student;
- The letter writer(s) provide evidence of the student's involvement in teamwork and collaborative leadership skills;
- The expertise of the major professor(s) will support the student and project (reviewers may use CV to review).

NMFS Mentor Letter(s) (10 Points of 20 points): The point scale is as follows: the NMFS mentor letter is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the NMFS mentor letter adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the NMFS mentor letter exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
- The letter writer(s) demonstrate knowledge of the student and their academic abilities and/or potential;
- The letter writer(s) adequately address the relevance of the research to NMFS;
- The letter writer(s) adequately address the broader impacts of the proposal;
- The expertise of the NMFS mentor will support the student and project.

(5) Overall application cohesion (10 points total). For the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship program, consider all aspects of the application materials (CV, summary of academic training in quantitative methods, project summary, education and career goal statement from the student, letters of recommendation). The point scale is as follows: the application is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the

application adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the application exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
- The application materials complement each other;
- The student brings an innovative and diverse perspective to the program;
- The application materials provide a clear picture of what the student would gain from receiving the NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship.

B. Review and Selection Process

State level/individual Sea Grant program review:

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

National Level Review:

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review.

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 (Section V.A.) and assigned scores by an independent review panel. Separate panels will be conducted for the population and ecosystem dynamics and the marine resource economics competitions. 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 recommend awarding 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 recommend awarding 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, 2022. This is the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF424).

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 via e-mail. The individual 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 https://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. § pt 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 https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/home/Login/LoginController.jpf and is also available at https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants, as well as https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.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) National Environmental Policy Act (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, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, 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.

(6) 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. § 200.206. 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.

(7) 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.

(8) 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.

(9) 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. § pt. 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.

(10) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities and/or vessels are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA-Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at: https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Mar/1330-52.222-70%20NOAA%20Sexual%20Assault%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment%20Prevention%20and%20Response%20Policy%20%28except%20for%20services%20for%20the%20use%20of%20a%20vessel%29%20%281%29.pdf. (NOTE: Please copy and paste this link to access)

C. Reporting

Financial reports are submitted semi-annually via Grants Online. Performance progress reports should follow program guidelines, must use the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) Format, and are submitted annually via Grants Online. Fellows will also be expected to present a review of the progress on their research during the annual NMFS-Sea Grant Fellowship Research Symposium.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (31 U.S.C. § 6101 note) 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 $30,000. Refer to 2 CFR § pt 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

NMFS-SG Sea Grant Fellowship Program Manager
National Sea Grant College Program
Tel: (240) 507-3712
E-mail: oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

(1) Recipients 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. Once projects have been selected, programs will need to provide the information requested in the Sea Grant 90-2 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://seagrant.noaa.gov).

(2) 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.

(3) The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other federal employees, and also by federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be

provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

(4) In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. § pt 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this funding opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 C.F.R. § pt 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

(5) There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any direct costs of proposal preparation. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.