National Sea Grant Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Marine Debris Challenge Competition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Funding Opportunity Description . . . 4
A. Program Objective . . . 4
B. Program Priorities . . . 5
C. Program Authority . . . 6
II. Award Information . . . 6
A. Funding Availability . . . 6
B. Project/Award Period . . . 7
C. Type of Funding Instrument . . . 7
III. Eligibility Information . . . 7
A. Eligible Applicants . . . 7
B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement . . . 8
C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility . . . 8
IV. Application and Submission Information . . . 8
A. Address to Request Application Package . . . 8
B. Content and Form of Application . . . 8
C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) . . . 14
D. Submission Dates and Times . . . 15
E. Intergovernmental Review . . . 15
F. Funding Restrictions . . . 15
G. Other Submission Requirements . . . 15
V. Application Review Information . . . 16
A. Evaluation Criteria . . . 16
B. Review and Selection Process . . . 17
C. Selection Factors . . . 18
D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates . . . 19
VI. Award Administration Information . . . 19
A. Award Notices . . . 19
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements . . . 19
C. Reporting . . . 22
VII. Agency Contacts . . . 23
VIII. Other Information . . . 24

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: National Sea Grant Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Marine Debris Challenge Competition

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007452

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Letters of Intent due 8/9/2022
Full Proposals due 10/27/2022

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Sea Grant College Program was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1966 (amended in 2020, Public Law 116-221) to support leveraged 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.

Subject to the availability of funding in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, Sea Grant anticipates approximately $16,000,000 will be available to support innovative, transformational research to application (R2A) projects that will address the prevention and/or removal of marine debris, with award periods of three years. "Research to application" or R2A refers to research and development projects that transition into tangible outcomes and outputs. Examples include (but are not limited to) new prototypes, products, processes, or tools.

Proposals may address (but are not limited to) innovative interception and/or removal technologies, reusable systems, microplastics, and/or nanoplastics. Proposals are sought that will build upon and extend existing knowledge and efforts related to marine debris; support broad, non-proprietary, and innovative research to address critical gaps with respect to marine debris; make that information available to communities and stakeholders; include Sea Grant education and extension professionals, community representatives, government, academic, non-governmental, and industry partners, as appropriate; and proactively incorporate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility at every level of the work. Proposals must include funding for Sea Grant education and/or extension personnel as collaborators. Community, government, academic, non-government, and industry stakeholder participation/involvement in projects is strongly encouraged. Applications DO NOT require the

standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. To this end, applicants should note that cost sharing and leverage of other funds is an element considered in the evaluation criteria.

Fully integrated teams of collaborators noted above must submit proposals with and through a Sea Grant program (Sea Grant Colleges, Institutions, or Coherent Area Programs). A Sea Grant program may submit or participate in more than one proposal. Collaborations among Sea Grant programs are encouraged, as appropriate. Please note that it is not a requirement that investigators, including the PI, are part of a Sea Grant program. Contact information for each program can be found at https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About. All 34 Sea Grant programs are eligible to serve as partners and to submit applications. If you need further assistance in identifying a program to partner with please contact the National Sea Grant Office via email at oar.sg.marine-debris@noaa.gov

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007452. Additional guidance and tips on how best to prepare an application are provided in the Sea Grant General Application Guide available at (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf).

This is one of two National Sea Grant federal funding opportunities in support of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to address the prevention and removal of marine debris. This competition will support original, innovative, and transformational marine debris prevention and removal research that pushes the boundaries of existing technologies and approaches, changes the current landscape of marine debris mitigation, and ties that research to tangible outputs.

A second opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007012, the “Special Projects H - National Sea Grant IIJA Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions,” is available for creating coalitions among areas, groups, or communities, especially those that have been systemically underserved or disadvantaged, to address marine debris prevention and removal. These two Sea Grant IIJA NOFOs complement a Marine Debris Program NOFO that will fund large-scale marine debris removal and interception projects.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA works through Sea Grant institutions to increase the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, and conservation of the Nation’s ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources by providing assistance to promote a strong educational base, responsive research and training activities, broad and prompt dissemination of knowledge and techniques, and multidisciplinary approaches to environmental problems, in accordance with 33 USC 1121(b).

There are many types, sources, and causes of marine debris, defined as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 C.F.R. § 909.1). Marine debris has long been a significant issue and may include (but is not limited to) plastic waste, trash, derelict vessels and fishing gear, and microplastics. However, the mass production of plastics, and their ubiquity of application and use across every economic sector, has ultimately resulted in an inescapable global marine debris problem. The United States is the top generator of plastic waste in the world (Law 2020), with a per capita generation rate of 2.22 to 2.72 kg per person per day (EREF 2016, Powell and Chertow 2019, U.S. EPA 2021a). The management of solid plastic waste varies per state and local government and consists of landfilling, recycling, and incineration. An unquantified amount of waste, however, is mismanaged and leaked into the environment. Recognizing the imperative to address the fate of plastics into marine environments, in 2004, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy identified marine “debris,” a term used to describe a wide-range of aquatic-solid waste pollution, as a national ocean priority (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste). To strengthen efforts in prevention and mitigation, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), has directed NOAA’s National Sea Grant College Program to execute $50.0 million over five years for the prevention and removal of marine debris. While plastics are a key focus, this work will also address other relevant types of marine debris, as appropriate. This work will complement broader NOAA efforts, particularly, the National Ocean Service’s Marine Debris Program, focused on active removal, cleanup, mitigation, and prevention of marine debris. Each Sea Grant program will determine and prioritize local needs and research-driven solutions that fully integrate the needs of historically underserved communities as defined by Executive Order 13985 (Section 2(b)).

This competition will support innovative research to application (R2A) projects that will address the prevention and/or removal of marine debris and provide the potential for transformational behavior change. “Research to application” or R2A refers to research that transitions into tangible outputs. Example outputs include (but are not limited to) inventive prototypes, commercial products, specialized services, or cutting-edge tools. Big ideas and risk taking are encouraged. Planning and capacity building activities are allowed but must accompany subsequent implementation activities; the end result of these projects cannot be solely academic or non-tangible outputs (e.g., scientific publications, awareness/training). A strong application will clearly outline how the project will produce new and effective deliverables that change the landscape for marine debris prevention and/or removal. Projects will communicate these outputs to the public (communities, stakeholders, industry, etc.) with the aim of addressing critical gaps with respect to marine debris. Proposals may address (but are not limited to) innovative interception and/or removal technologies, reusable systems, microplastics, and/or nanoplastics. See Section I.B. Program Priorities for more details.

Competitive projects will include funding for Sea Grant education and extension professionals and display a diverse coalition of partners including (but not limited to) community representatives, stakeholder groups, and industry collaborators. Projects will proactively incorporate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility at every level of the work.

Principal investigators of proposals selected for funding will be required to participate in annual National Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings to share results of work conducted, discuss challenges, synthesize outputs, and to plan next steps. Cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support will make projects more competitive. Applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. To this end, applicants should note that cost sharing and leverage of other funds is an element considered in the evaluation criteria.

B. Program Priorities

This competition will fund proposals that invest in transformative marine debris research to application (R2A) projects that will show clear and measurable outcomes and applications for marine debris prevention and removal. Projects should have a clear pathway for research or ideas to transition into application, operation, or commercialization by relevant stakeholders, and have the potential for long-term utilization. Proposal topics should support priorities laid out in relevant documents, such as the NAS 2021 report, relevant regional marine debris action plans (https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/emergency-response-guides-and-regional-action-plans#pub-term-145), strategic plans, and/or other documents, such as:

• Development of innovative removal and/or interception technologies and reusable systems that prevent debris from entering the marine environment.
• Innovative solutions for mitigation and clean-up of derelict fishing gear and ghost gear.
• Microplastics and nanoplastics.
▫ Mitigation of the effects of microplastics and nanoplastics on human health and marine biota (including residence time, digestive degradation, and ingestion and excretion rates).
▫ Detection methods for microplastics and nanoplastics in products, organisms, and/or the environment.
▫ Improvements to wastewater treatment that eliminate microplastics and nanoplastics from effluent and sludge.
▫ Mitigation of the impacts of plastics in food webs (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste).

Proposed projects should also:
1. Be responsive to state, local, and regional needs within a national framework.
2. Leverage existing Sea Grant and partner investments and capacities.
3. Embed diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) fully into the effort.
4. Show how this work will be enhanced through partnerships, including collaboration among Sea Grant programs, with the NOAA Marine Debris Program, and with other appropriate partners.

Proposals should address any of the priorities in this section along with the four principles above to be acceptable for this opportunity.

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.) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (Pub.L. 117–58 ).

## II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to the availability of funding, this announcement describes how eligible applicants should apply for the National Sea Grant IIJA Marine Debris Challenge Competition. Sea Grant anticipates having approximately $16,000,000 to fund approximately 5-12 projects of up to three years' duration. We expect the average project size will be between $1,000,000 and $2,000,000; however, applications may request up to

$3,000,000 in federal funds addressing the program priorities.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards, or that any application will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if a project fails to receive full funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is April 1, 2023, with projects to be completed by March 31, 2026.

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 strategic engagement with the National Sea Grant Marine Debris Team, support from National Sea Grant Communication efforts, and annual National Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings.

## III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity: Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, and Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs. A Sea Grant program may submit or participate in more than one proposal.

Other interested entities must submit proposals in partnership with and through a relevant Sea Grant program. Please note that it is not a requirement that investigators, including the PI, are part of a Sea Grant program; however proposals must be submitted with and through a Sea Grant program. Contact information for Sea Grant programs can be found at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About. If you need further assistance in identifying a program to partner with please contact one of the Sea Grant Marine Debris Team listed below in Section VII. Agency Contacts.

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make

available specialized expertise, facilities, or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use.

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) by recruiting, retaining, and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, 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, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this opportunity.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Standard Sea Grant cost sharing is waived for this call. However, cost sharing, leveraged funds, and in-kind support will make projects more competitive. Applicants are strongly encouraged to combine NOAA federal funding with formal matching contributions and informal leverage from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors. Community, government, academic, non-government, and industry stakeholder participation/involvement in projects is strongly encouraged through cost sharing, leveraged funds, and/or in-kind match.

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 www.grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2007452. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of these required proposal elements (and where to locate them). Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

Additional guidance on Sea Grant-specific form completion can be found here: Sea Grant General Application Guide (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf)

The submitting Sea Grant program or applicant must redact all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII that must be redacted from the application includes, but is not limited to, social security number, date of birth, student identification number (from transcripts) or other information which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

Required Elements:

Letter of Intent Requirements

Applicants will be asked to submit a letter of intent (LOI) before a full proposal is submitted. Applicants that do not submit a LOI will not be eligible to submit a full proposal. Full proposals should not deviate greatly from the LOI. However, LOIs are not wholly binding and the applicant may tweak details of their project before submitting the full proposal as their research to application plan evolves. LOIs are meant to provide Sea Grant with metrics on the scope and size of the application pool in order to assist with reviewer recruitment and review event planning.

The letter of intent should be no longer than 2 pages and will include:
- Working project title
- PI Name(s)
- PI Position(s) and Affiliation
- Partnering Sea Grant program
- PI Contact Information
- Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach, and how it will be transformative within the proposal's scope of action
- The approximate funding to be requested

Full Proposal Requirements (please also see VIII. Other Information for additional post-application required elements for submission):

1. Project Narrative
The Application must include the following documents in the following format:

a) Project Description

Project Description. The total number of pages in the project description can be up to thirty (30). Applicants do not need to use the entire 30-page maximum. Depending on the complexity of the proposed activities, a shorter description may suffice. Any works cited, CVs, letters of support, and current and pending support sections included do not contribute to the page limit.

i. Cover page (not included in the page count)

• Project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of PI and any co-PIs.

• Budget overview - Total cost and annual breakdown of requested funding by partner and a description of cost sharing and leveraged funds if available.

ii. Project abstract (½ page maximum; not included in the page count)

iii. Project background

• Explain the specific marine debris problem(s) this project seeks to address and justify its importance.

• Explain why this problem would benefit from innovative solutions.

iv. Project objectives

• Provide a list of clearly defined project objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity.

v. Project details

• Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives, including how these methods will be innovative and/or transformational.

• Provide a list of all project partners and explain how this project leverages the expertise of researchers and stakeholders.

• Provide a description of any cost sharing and/or leveraged funds.

vi. Anticipated outcomes and deliverables

• Provide a list of expected outcomes and deliverables that will result from your project. Explain how these tools, technologies, data products, and/or management practices will be directly applied to the current and future needs of communities and stakeholders.

vii. Project timeline

• Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work, which covers the entire duration of the project. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and release of deliverables.

• Applicants submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects should state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded

human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.

viii. Future competed research (if applicable)

• If funds are to be used for competitive research, the program may use a Future Competed Projects placeholder project.

• Competitions must adhere to the National Sea Grant Competition Policy.

• As part of the placeholder, the program should provide a short description of:

▫ Their proposed research plan, including preliminary topics.

▫ How competitively selected projects will be integrated with other program elements and existing strategic/action plans (e.g. relevant Marine Debris Action plans).

▫ How the program will proactively engage minority serving institutions, underrepresented researchers, and other groups that have historically been excluded from competitive opportunities.

▫ How the program will recruit diverse review panelists.

• Research projects must also include funds to travel to the annual Sea Grant Marine Debris meetings.

ix. Community engagement, DEIJA, and outreach plan

• In this section, describe how the proposed activity was developed in collaboration with community members - including traditionally underserved groups - that are impacted by marine debris or its sources.

• Describe how the work will provide long-term engagement and support to those groups.

• Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by NSGO related to diversity, equity, and inclusion: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visioning/DiversityInclusion.

x. Works cited (does not count towards page limit)

• Any in-text citations should be listed here.

xi. Curriculum vitae (CV) for each co-PI (does not count towards page limit)

• Each co-PI’s CV should not be longer than 2 pages.

xii. Letters of support (does not count towards page limit)

• Any letters of support can be included here.

xiii. Current and pending support (does not count towards page limit)

• Describe any current or pending sources of support if applicable.

b) Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)

A separate NEPA Questionnaire or NEPA Statement must be completed filled out for each individual project in the application.

The Questionnaire can be found here:
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation. Applicants must ensure that the Questionnaire is completed in full and includes 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. Guidance on how to complete the Questionnaire and example Questionnaires for different types of projects can be found here:
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation.

The NEPA Questionnaire is required for ALL research projects (those whose project ID starts with “R/”) even if the project is fully lab-based or relies on social science. The NEPA Questionnaire is also required for any project that meets the following criteria:

- Environmental permits, authorizations or waivers
- Biological take and/or release
- Environmental sampling
- Hazardous or toxic substances and waste
- Permanent or temporary environmental effects
- Endangered or threatened species and/or protected areas
- Known or unknown risks to human health or the environment
- Controversial environmental subject matter

NEPA Statement
The NEPA Statement can be used instead of the NEPA Questionnaire for certain low-impact projects. If none of the project’s activities will take place in the environment and the project is not research, you may include the NEPA Statement in place of the NEPA Questionnaire. However, NOAA has final responsibility to determine whether a project or action requires environmental compliance review. If NOAA determines that the NEPA Statement is not sufficient, staff may request that a NEPA Questionnaire be provided instead. Please use the following format for the NEPA Statement:

“This project’s activities include [list the activities]. Because no part of this project will take place in the environment or involve the collection of environmental data, the NOAA environmental compliance questionnaire is not needed.”

Some examples of projects that can use the NEPA Statement are:

- Program management (i.e., any projects be assigned the “M/” project ID)
- Placeholder projects (e.g., "Future Competed Projects"; these projects will have a Special Award Condition on the grant and undergo environmental compliance review at that time)

• Workshops or conferences that do not involve the above list of actions in the previous section
• Communication activities that do not involve the above list of actions in the previous section
• Fellowships where the Sea Grant Program does not have discretion over the fellow's externally funded research

c) Data Management Plan
For reference: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf See Section VI. B. (8)
All applications should include a Data Management Plan. If a proposal responding to this competition will not generate environmental data, the data management plan should say, "This project will not generate environmental data, therefore a data management plan is not required."
For reference: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf

2. Budget Narrative
The budget narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justification) in the following order and format. Sea Grant 90-4 forms and budget justifications must be included for each individual project within an application. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found at:
https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf

a) Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362)
Sea Grant 90-4 forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 form should be completed for each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3). The Sea Grant 90-4 form can be downloaded at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation Guidance on filling out these forms is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guide.

b) Budget Justification
For each year of the project (or each individual project within an application), a budget justification is required. Each budget justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each budget justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 form, as appropriate. Guidance on completing the budget justifications is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guide.

3. Overall Application
In addition to the forms required above, 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 (links found below). These include:

a) SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)
This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant. 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 - Non-Construction Programs,” must describe the entire funding period (broken out by year if multi-year) 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 by year with separate columns for each year of federal funding as well as each year of non-federal funding. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).

c) 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.

d) CD-511 (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce)
The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.

e) SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046)
The form, titled “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” must be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

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 Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent must be received via email by the Competition Manager (oar.sg.marine-debris@noaa.gov) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Tuesday, August 9, 2022.

Complete applications must be received and validated by grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on Thursday, October 27, 2022. Incomplete or late applications will not be reviewed. Applicants should be aware that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission.

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

The Sea Grant Act at 33 USC 1124(d)(2) states:
“No payment under any grant or contract under this section may be applied to:
(A) the purchase or rental of any land; or
(B) the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel; except that payment under any such grant or contract may be applied to the short-term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings which are in direct support of any Sea Grant Program or project and may, if approved by the Secretary, be applied to the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures, or to the rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of activities under any Sea Grant Program or project.”

G. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov. 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

Each proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria

1. Importance and applicability of the proposed project to the program goals (30 points). This criterion assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to program priorities. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

a. Marine debris priority area - Does the project address a significant marine debris problem? Does the problem have regional or national significance? (10 points)

b. Innovation and transformation - Does the project propose innovative and transformational solutions to the specific marine debris problem? Does the project employ creative thinking and new ideas? Projects that propose pilot studies that have the potential to be scaled up or duplicated will score higher than proposals with a less ambitious range. (10 points)

c. Research to application - Does the project have a clear pathway for research or ideas to transition into application, operation, or commercialization by relevant stakeholders? (10 points)

2. Technical and scientific merit (35 points). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, whether there are clear project goals and objectives, and data management considerations. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

a. Project description and milestones - Does the proposal include sufficient detail to assess the merit of the planned actions? Does the proposal include a realistic timeline of key milestones and deliverables? (5 points)

b. Methodological strength - Are the proposed actions feasible from a biological and engineering perspective? Does the proposed approach have a sufficient chance of success? Are performance measures and metrics of success explicitly stated by the applicant? (10 points)

c. Deliverables - Does the proposal include clear deliverables? Are the deliverables likely to measurably mitigate marine debris? Does the proposal include sufficient detail regarding how the applicant will transition project activities into said deliverables? Are the deliverables useful and usable to communities and stakeholders? (15 points)

d. Project resilience and longevity - Does the proposal describe the susceptibility of potential project sites and activities to climate change and other long-term impacts? Does the proposal have a sustainability plan for its deliverables? (5 points)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (10 points). This criterion assesses whether the

applicant and partners possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed activities.

a. Does the project team demonstrate the necessary technical experience and background in planning, design, and management in order to successfully carry out the project? (10 points)

4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement, DEIJA, and Outreach (13 points). This criterion assesses whether the project effectively engages local communities in a few ways. In particular, this criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused, effective, and equitable education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources, Sea Grant's strategic focus areas, and the goals of the individual competition announcement to target audiences. This criterion also assesses how well the project engages underserved communities in addressing marine debris issues, current and historical inequities, and builds lasting partnerships to address marine debris. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

a. Inclusive planning and engagement - Are local communities - including underserved communities - meaningfully engaged in project planning and activities? Is there a clear strategy to obtain input from a diverse range of stakeholders? (5 points)

b. Education - Is there a clear strategy to share information about the project's work on marine debris to a broad audience through formal or non-formal education? (4 points)

c. Sea Grant engagement - Are Sea Grant activities fully supported and utilized? (2 points)

d. Marine Debris Action Plans - Does the project tie into existing activities and partnerships outlined in regional Marine Debris Action Plans? (2 points)

5. Project Costs (12 points). This criterion assesses whether the project budget is realistic and commensurate with the project's needs and timeframe. For this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

a. Budget appropriateness - Does the budget cover the proposed activities? Are the spending levels appropriate compared to market value? (5 points)

b. Cost sharing and leveraged funds - Does the applicant complement NOAA's investment with other funding sources, including non-federal contributions, federal leverage, or in-kind support? Does the cost sharing demonstrate meaningful partnerships between government, industry, academia, and communities? (7 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full proposal application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Late applications, applications that are missing required elements listed in Section IV. B. above, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected

without further review.

Applications that pass the administrative review will then receive a merit review. Each proposal will receive at least three written reviews from the reviewers assessing its merits with regard to the evaluation criteria.

The proposals, supplemented with information from the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, will also be reviewed by the program manager to assess the environmental compliance of the proposed actions. The program manager, NEPA staff lead, or grants specialist may contact the applicants 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 award 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:

- Availability of funding.
- Balance/distribution of funds:
  - o Geographically
  - o By type of institution
  - o By type of partners
  - o By research priority
  - o By project types
- Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.
- Program priorities and policy factors.
- Applicant’s prior award performance.
- Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups.
- Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Investigators may be asked to answer questions; and/or modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets (including overall funding level) to address the issues raised by the reviewers, the competition manager, the Selecting Official, or the Grants Officer before an award is made. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to start April 1, 2023.

## VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification when the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA grants officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the authorizing official and the PI of the project either electronically or in hard copy. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected. Anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to all applicants, regardless of whether they were selected to be funded.

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. Part 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 http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/external_links.html , 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)
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) Indirect Cost Rate - If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and

Conditions. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the MTDC base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

(9) 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.

(10) 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. Part 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.

(11) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities 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.

C. Reporting

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 Part 170.

Once applications have been selected for funding, applicants must submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (for each project within the application) through the 90-2 Webform portal. This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been awarded. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on Inside Sea Grant. Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the National Sea Grant College Program public website.

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.

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## VII. Agency Contacts

Questions about this opportunity should be directed to oar.sg.marine-debris@noaa.gov. Please specify that your question is related to the National Sea Grant IIJA Marine Debris Challenge Competition funding opportunity in the subject line.

The National Sea Grant Office mailing address is:

NOAA Sea Grant
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-734-1066

Fillable versions of required Sea Grant forms can be found here:
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation
Guidance for completing these forms is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document:
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf

VIII. Other Information

Once applications have been selected for funding, applicants must submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (for each project within the application) through the 90-2 Webform portal (https://webform.pier.seagrant.noaa.gov/). This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been awarded. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on Inside Sea Grant (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation). 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).

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.

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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. 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 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.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 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 Notice of 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 CFR § 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.

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.