



# FY2024-2026 Request for Preproposals

## **Table of Contents**

<i>Overview .....</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Program Objective .....</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Program Priorities .....</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Funding Availability.....</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Project/Award Period .....</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Eligibility .....</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.....</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility.....</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Proposal Submission Process.....</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Preproposal Application .....</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>Preproposal Evaluation Criteria .....</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>Full Proposal Application .....</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>Timeline .....</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>Preproposal Informational Meeting .....</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>Program Contacts.....</i>	<b>7</b>

## Overview

The Georgia Sea Grant College Program invites research proposals for the next two-year grant period that begins on Feb. 1, 2024, and ends on Jan. 31, 2026. The application process involves two steps:

- Prospective investigators submit a preproposal by 11:30 p.m. EST on Feb. 24, 2023
- Prospective investigators submit a full proposal by 11:30 p.m. EST on May 26, 2023

To be eligible to submit a full proposal, applicants **MUST** submit a preproposal by the preproposal deadline.

All Sea Grant project funds are awarded via a highly competitive merit review process that includes evaluation of proposals by technical experts and community partners.

## Program Objective

Georgia Sea Grant invests in use-inspired research that improves the understanding, management, and wise use of Georgia's coastal and marine ecosystems. Experts conduct research in close collaboration with on-the-ground extension agents, community partners, educators, or decision-makers. Research results are shared with those who need it the most, in ways that are timely, meaningful, and relevant.

## Program Priorities

Projects should propose to answer a clear research question or set of research questions that address the needs and priorities identified in Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan (<https://gacoast.uga.edu/about/about-us/overview/>). All applications should align with one or more of our four focus areas:

- Environment Literacy and Workforce Development
- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
- Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Resilient Communities and Economies

Applicants should consider incorporating the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice into their applications. For the FY2024-26 funding cycle, Georgia Sea Grant will prioritize funding projects with outcomes that demonstrate potential to benefit underserved<sup>1</sup> communities in Georgia. These benefits may include but are not limited to improved quality of life, job training and student opportunities, workforce development opportunities, and/or increased access to beneficial services, data, or information.

We have a special interest in the following themes:

- Preparing Georgia's coastal communities for changing weather and climate conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Underserved communities/groups/individuals include those who have fewer, lower-quality and/or no access to resources and services or those who are otherwise disenfranchised.

- Understanding climate change impacts on coastal and marine wildlife, habitats, and ecosystems.
- Identifying barriers to the production, supply, consumption, and promotion of commercial seafood products in Georgia.
- Addressing environmental justice concerns through restoration of degraded coastal ecosystems.
- Assessing sustainable development and habitat restoration practices that reduce or mitigate the impacts of land development on our coastal ecosystems and communities.
- Assessment of human impacts on water resources and natural systems, including the prevention and removal of marine debris.
- Assessment of ocean literacy during informal/experiential learning experiences, including educational outcomes of K-12 teachers, [post]college interns, and the public.
- Research focused on Georgia’s coast that investigates new, high-impact learning and training opportunities in non-classroom and virtual settings.

Additional topics of interest include aquaculture, seafood safety, tourism, stormwater and green infrastructure, sustainable community planning, water quality and quantity, and fisheries management in Georgia.

We strongly encourage eligible applicants to connect with our extension, law and policy, communications and education staff for potential collaborations in a timely manner. Please note that Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant staff may participate in the proposal if the scope of work fits within their planned activities, and their interest in collaborating on a particular project. There is no funding needed for staff participation on a project, but staff may still require funding for publications, supplies, travel, meetings, communications or other tasks. A complete list of our staff is available on the following webpage: <https://gacoast.uga.edu/about/about-us/staff-list/>

## Funding Availability

Projects can request up to \$75,000 per year for two years (maximum \$150,000 for two years). We anticipate funding 4-6 two-year projects. Applications require 50% non-federal match.

Based on the project scope and budget of all applications that are selected for Sea Grant awards, the actual award amounts may differ from the funds requested by the applicant. Please note that Sea Grant awards are contingent upon availability of funds from the Congress, satisfactory performance, and continued relevance to program objectives. For more details about Sea Grant award policies, please review the Award Policies document linked under “Resources” at the bottom of our RFP webpage: <https://gacoast.uga.edu/sea-grant-request-proposal/>

## Project/Award Period

Projects funded through this request for proposals will have a performance period of up to 24 months with a start date of Feb. 1, 2024, and end date of Jan. 31, 2026. Applicants can request funding for up to two years.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for a Georgia Sea Grant funding award, a recipient should be affiliated with an educational or research institution including colleges and universities, museums, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Priority will be given to Georgia-focused and Georgia-based applicants. Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant staff are not eligible for funding; however, depending on their involvement in a research project, they can be listed as co-investigators. Private consultants can serve as co-investigators or project partners but should not receive more than 50% of the project funds.

Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive programs that serve diverse demographic populations and communities in Georgia. We encourage applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital status, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status to apply for this opportunity.

## Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

At the full proposal stage, target budgets should not be greater than \$150,000 (maximum amount for two years) in direct and indirect costs combined. Please note that this amount does not include the non-federal matching funds provided by the PI. Applicants can use their negotiated indirect rate to calculate indirect costs on their applications. If applicants do not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, the de-minimum 10% rate can be used. Applicants can also elect to use a rate lower than their federally negotiated indirect rate.

All Sea Grant awards have mandatory cost-sharing. For every two federal dollars being requested, one dollar in non-federal cost-sharing is required. Institutional cost-sharing may be one of two forms: in-kind contributions or matching funds. In-kind contributions are defined under federal guidelines as “contributions other than cash.” While they usually add value to a project, they do not require an actual cash outlay. Some examples of in-kind contributions are effort (existing salaries and benefits of investigators and/or others working on the proposed project, and paid from non-federal sources), indirect costs not charged to the sponsor, third-party contributions and donated labor, materials, equipment, supplies, ship-time, and services. Matching funds are actual cash contributions.

## Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Eligible applicants cannot submit more than two applications as a principal investigator or co-investigator.

## Proposal Submission Process

All applications MUST be submitted using Georgia Sea Grant’s proposal management portal called eSeaGrant ([www.eseagrant.uga.edu](http://www.eseagrant.uga.edu)). Applications that are not submitted via eSeaGrant will not be considered for review.

Potential investigators must complete a one-time registration process in eSeaGrant. Instructions on how to register to the system and submit your proposal can be reviewed here:

<https://gacoast.uga.edu/sea-grant-request-proposal/>

No proposals will be accepted after the proposal deadline. All proposals go through an administrative review to ensure completeness and conformance with proposal submission requirements. Adherence to guidelines is strictly enforced. Any proposal that does not adhere to the instructions in the solicitation may be returned without review.

## Preproposal Application

Applicants **MUST** submit a preproposal to be considered for funding. Preproposals must be single or double-spaced with 1-inch margins, written in 12-point Times New Roman font, and strictly adhere to the page limits. All applications should contain the following components:

1. Cover Page that includes project title, names and affiliations of principal investigator and co-investigator(s) (if applicable), partners, proposed topic area(s), and preliminary budget request.
2. Two-page project summary that outlines the problem statement, rationale, objectives, and methodology for the proposed research project. Clearly outline expected outcomes including any benefits to underserved communities in Georgia, and identify any stakeholders (users/groups/organizations) that will be involved and benefit from the proposed work.
3. One-page preliminary budget that provides a brief breakdown of anticipated costs for each year of project including wages, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, subawards or contracts, supplies, other costs and total budget. Preproposals do not need a fully executed budget. Match does not need to be detailed in the preproposal, however, upon submission of a full proposal, PIs will need to demonstrate a 1:2 non-federal to federal dollar match. PIs should also plan to budget for the negotiated federal indirect cost rates for their institutions/organizations.
4. One-page list of references.
5. Two-page CVs for principal investigator, co-investigator(s), and main project partners.

Please include page numbers. No other items, appendices, letters of support or supplementary documents are permitted for preproposals.

The preproposal submission process will include a voluntary demographics questionnaire which Georgia Sea Grant is required to administer on behalf of Sea Grant's home agency -- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA is interested in learning more about who applies to their funding opportunities. Questionnaire answers will not be provided to reviewers, or otherwise influence the outcome of our biennial competition.

## Preproposal Evaluation Criteria

Pre-proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

- Does the proposal align with Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant's strategic plan, and fit within the scope of thematic areas of the RFP?
- What is the potential of the proposed project to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
- Is the plan to carry out the proposed project well-reasoned and organized?
- How will the proposed work involve targeted stakeholders/partners?

- What is the potential of the proposed project to benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes including benefits to underserved communities in Georgia?
- What are the qualifications of the investigators?
- Does the budget estimate seem appropriate?

## Full Proposal Application

Full proposals will only be accepted from applicants who have submitted a preproposal. Priority will be given to those preproposals that have been encouraged by Georgia Sea Grant to be developed into full proposals. Applicants are strongly recommended to consider and address any feedback that is provided on their preproposals. Full proposals should not deviate substantially from preproposal in the scope of the project or list of personnel.

Complete instructions for full proposals submission, including full proposal review criteria and connection information for informational webinar, will be provided along with preproposal feedback. This guidance will also be available on Georgia Sea Grant’s research webpage: <https://gacoast.uga.edu/sea-grant-request-proposal/>

## Timeline

January 25	RFP Released
January 30	Preproposal Informational Meeting
February 24	Preproposals Due
Early April	Notification of Decisions on Preproposals
April 25	Full Proposal Informational Meeting
May 26	Full Proposals Due
Early-October	Notification of Decisions on Full Proposals

## Preproposal Informational Meeting

Prospective investigators are encouraged to participate in an informational webinar at 10 a.m. on Jan. 30, 2023, about the RFP process, priorities and broader organization. Register for the webinar at <https://gacoast.uga.edu/sea-grant-request-proposal/>.

## Program Contacts

- For questions about Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant or program priorities, please contact director Mark Risse at [mrisse@uga.edu](mailto:mrisse@uga.edu)
- For questions about eligibility or submission requirements, please contact associate director Mona Behl at [mbehl@uga.edu](mailto:mbehl@uga.edu)