



FY2024 - 2026
Request for Full Proposals

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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 June 10, 2023

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. Research must be grounded in reciprocal relationships¹. 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 underserved² 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.

¹ Reciprocal relationships are exemplified by non-extractive research projects, by collaborating closely with all parties (researchers, partners, users) to identify roles and responsibilities on the project, allocating resources to participants, and ensuring that research results benefit all parties engaged in the project.

² 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.esagrant.uga.edu). Applications that are not submitted via eSeaGrant will not be considered for review. 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.

Full Proposal Submission Process

Any applicant who submitted a preproposal to Georgia Sea Grant during the FY2024-26 funding cycle is eligible to submit a full proposal. 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.

Required Elements

Full proposals must:

- Clearly align with Sea Grant priorities, focus areas, and goals and objectives outlined in Sea Grant's strategic plan.
- Clearly identify, engage, and be responsive to the interests and needs of users.
- Engage Sea Grant education or extension staff or other outreach or education partners.

Application Requirements

Full proposals 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. Please include page numbers.

All applications should contain the following components:

1. Investigator information: This information is carried over from the preproposal stage. It can be updated to reflect any changes in the project team.
2. Project Summary: One-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. Project Narrative: The project narrative should be no longer than 12-pages. It should provide a clear description of work that will be undertaken and must include research needs, goals and objectives for the period of the proposed research. The narrative should identify the significance of the research project and its relevance to Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. It should also describe the general plan of work including project design, methodology, anticipated outputs and outcomes, an outreach plan, and timelines for major tasks. Researchers are **strongly encouraged** to review appendix A for guidance on developing effective outreach and engagement plans.

Some guiding questions to inform the project narrative are as follows.

Rationale: What is the proposed research? What is the problem or issue that the proposed research will address? Why should Georgia Sea Grant invest in the proposed project?

Scientific and Professional Merit: How will the proposed research advance the state of scientific knowledge or discipline? How will the proposed research be implemented? Which methods will be used in the proposed research?

Innovativeness: How is the proposed research unique? How does the proposed research activity lead to innovative solutions to a research need that is being addressed?

Relationship to Sea Grant Priorities: What is the project's relevance to Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant's program goals as outlined in the strategic plan?

Outputs and Outcomes: What benefits (societal/economic/environmental) could accrue if the project is successful? How does the proposed research contribute to, or is an essential or complementary unit to other projects?

Outreach Plan: Who will use and benefit from this research? Are the users engaged in developing the proposal? How will the results be made available to the users? Does the project leverage or create any professional or technical partnerships? Are the roles of partners and any efforts or resources that will be leveraged to support the project clearly outlined?

Timeline: Does the project description clearly outline a timeline for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products and key program outcomes?

Results from previous Sea Grant support (if applicable): What were the outcomes of the applicant's previously funded Sea Grant project?

4. References: The list of references should be limited to 2-pages. These pages are outside of the 12-page project description.
5. Budget Narrative and Justification: Applications must use the budget form in eSeaGrant to prepare their budget. A detailed budget narrative/justification, broken out by individual tasks for both years, must be included. The budget narrative should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project description for the entire award period.

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known contracts and subawards and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in the narrative. Describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project.

6. Letters of Support: Letters of support from collaborating institutions, contributors of in-kind or matching funds, and organizations that will benefit from project results may be included. Letters must clearly indicate the level of commitment and any pertinent details about collaboration.
7. Data Management Plan: All applicants are required to complete Data Management Plan” (DMP) in eseagrants. Funds may be allocated for data management activities. The DMP is not part of the 12-page project description. Even if no data will be produced, a DMP is required that states: “No data are expected to be produced from this project.” Data Management Plans are not required at the pre-proposal stage.

In collaborative proposals, involving sub-awards, the lead PI is responsible for the DMP of the entire project. The lead PI may assign distinct roles and responsibilities to co-PIs with respect to the management of data. The lead PI is also responsible to provide a contingency plan for management of data in case of departure of key personnel from the project. The lead PI is also responsible for reporting in the Annual and Final Reports on the data management, preservation, and access for the whole project. DMPs will be considered during the merit review process.

8. Institutional Letter of Commitment: A letter signed by an institutional representative who has the authority to commit institutional resources and cost share dedicated to the proposed project is required. The institutional letter of commitment for the applicant must be on the institution’s standard letter of commitment letterhead stationery.

Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Full proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

1. 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?
2. Does the proposal identify specific users and clearly articulate their needs?
3. What is the potential of the proposed project to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
4. Is the plan to carry out the proposed project well-reasoned and organized?
5. How will partners and users engage on the project? Is their engagement corroborated in letter(s) of support?
6. What is the potential of the proposed project to benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes including benefits to underserved communities in Georgia?
7. Does the project team have adequate expertise, experience, and well-defined roles to complete the proposed work?

8. Is the timeline realistic for the proposed work?
9. Does the budget estimate seem appropriate? Does it include sufficient resources for integrating user input? For example, travel support, honoraria, child-care compensation to attend a meeting, etc.
10. Is the data management plan described in sufficient detail?

Timeline

January 25	RFP Released
January 30	Preproposal Informational Meeting
February 24	Preproposals Due
Early-April	Notification of Decisions on Preproposals
May 9	Full Proposal Informational Meeting
June 10	Full Proposals Due
Early-October	Notification of Decisions on Full Proposals

Full Proposal Informational Meeting - May 9

Prospective investigators are encouraged to participate in an informational meeting on May 9 at 10 a.m. Register for the meeting using this link:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0vcOyvqDsuH9elthrBNcTq3y97rncGpAxs#/registration>

Award Administration Information

Award Notices

Proposals that are recommended for funding by Georgia Sea Grant will be forwarded to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). Notification of the award is made to all lead PIs who submitted a full proposal via email. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewers, will be provided automatically to the PI.

A Georgia Sea Grant award consists of: (i) the award letter which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (ii) an itemized budget, on which Georgia Sea Grant has based its support; (iii) the proposal referenced in the award letter; and (iv) any applicable award conditions.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA requires that Federal agencies consider the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. If a proposed project might have an environmental impact, the proposal should furnish sufficient information to assist Sea Grant in assessing the environmental consequences of supporting the project. Applicants will be required to cooperate with Sea Grant 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. Georgia Sea Grant will determine:

- the adequacy of the information submitted,
- whether or not additional information is needed, and

- whether or not an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be necessary.

A NEPA form will only be required if the proposal is selected for funding.

Program Contacts

- For questions about Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant or program priorities, please contact director, Mark Risse at mrisse@uga.edu.
- For questions about application submission, review, and approval process or the eSG system, please contact associate director, Mona Behl at mbehl@uga.edu.
- For all budget related questions, please contact administrative financial director, Sara Karlsson at karlsson@uga.edu.
- To discuss outreach or education plans, please contact associate marine extension director, Bryan Fluech at fluech@uga.edu or associate director for education, Anne Lindsay at lindsaya@uga.edu.
- To discuss communication and dissemination of research results, please contact public relations coordinator, Emily Kenworthy at ekenworthy@uga.edu.
- For aquaculture-related questions, please contact director of shellfish laboratory, Tom Bliss at tbliss@uga.edu

Appendix A: Guidance on Developing Effective Outreach and Partner Engagement Plan

(Adapted from Oregon Sea Grant)

The purpose of this document is to help guide development of effective outreach and identify ways to best engage partners in Georgia Sea Grant funded research projects.

Definitions

Audience: Organizations or group of individuals that are directly affected by research (results or data). The outreach needs and approach will vary depending upon the research and the audience(s).

Outreach: Sharing of project information, including communication of research results to an audience that is interested in or affected by the research (i.e., coastal communities, industry).

Outreach Plan: Detailed description of the approach that will be used for sharing information with the audience(s). A competitive proposal will include a specific outreach plan that includes information such as:

- Identification of a target audience(s) who may be interested in or affected by the results of the research.
- Specific methods to reach that audience(s).
- Goals for how the audience(s) will be affected or changed by the information.

Partner Engagement: Collaboration with project partners during the formulation of research question(s) or in the process of answering the research question(s) (i.e., while doing the research).

Project Partners: Stakeholders (individuals or organizations) who will assist in the completion of the project goals. A partner may participate in the research design, implementation, or lend expertise that the PI(s) do not possess.

Interested/Supportive Stakeholder: An individual or entity that is supportive of the research but is not directly involved in the research process or affected by the research results. These interested stakeholders may write letters of support but are not the target audience for outreach efforts and are not involved in research design or implementation.

Outreach

Researchers should clearly define the goal(s) of their outreach. Based on the goal(s), researchers should consider working backwards to define steps that would help them achieve their project goals. Consider identifying specific areas where Sea Grant assistance is needed to accomplish those steps. Researchers should consider the following questions whilst designing their outreach plans.

- What is/are the goal(s) of the outreach?
- Who does it impact?
- Who are the audiences who might benefit from this information?

- How will they use this information?

Outreach About Research Results to Affected/Interested Audiences		
	Proposal Characteristics	Evaluation Criteria
Goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, meaningful, and realistic outreach goals are defined. • Adequate timeline and funding to achieve goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the goals stated? • What is the anticipated outcome of the outreach effort? • How might the audience change with this information? • Does the timeline and budget fit the project?
Audience(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-defined audience(s) with a clear connection to the research results. • Evidence of audience buy-in/need. [optional] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the audience defined? • Will the audience(s) be affected by the research? • Letters of support stating the need for this research [optional]
Outreach Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-defined approach for accessing/engaging identified audiences who will be impacted by research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the approach effective for engaging intended audience(s)? • Is the outreach product designed to reach the intended audiences impacted by the research (<i>i.e., on their terms/timelines</i>)?
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan to evaluate outreach goals are included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an evaluation plan for the outreach? How will success be determined?
Timeline	Typically, towards the end of the project.	

Partner Engagement

A competitive Sea Grant proposal will likely engage stakeholders as partners in the development or implementation of the proposal development and project implementation process. Partners on Sea Grant projects are usually professionals working outside academia, including but not limited to coastal management agencies, commercial or recreational fishermen, small business owners, representatives from environmental NGOs, K-12 teachers or students, local government officials or other end-user and stakeholder groups.

Georgia Sea Grant strongly encourages collaboration with individuals from historically marginalized groups and scholars at Minority-Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Georgia. Researchers might wish to consider ways in which their research projects can address systemic barriers faced by individuals from historically marginalized groups and promote equity and justice.

Partners provide a number of benefits. For example, partners can:

- Play critical roles in helping to design or implement the project.
- Connect researchers to local stakeholders or end-users of information.
- Leverage researcher’s ability to implement the project.

If stakeholders are not truly playing these roles, they should be referred to as “interested stakeholders”.

Researchers should consider the following questions whilst building partnerships.

- Are there any individuals/groups that could help with research design and/or implementation?
- What is the goal of including the partner in the project?
- What connections/expertise do they bring to the process?
- How do they benefit from being involved in the research process?
- What is the partner's role in the process?

Partner Engagement in Research Design and/or implementation		
	Proposal Characteristics	Evaluation Criteria
Partner(s) Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partners are identified. ● Partners' role(s) is clearly defined. ● Partners show support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letters of support ● Partners are involved in the research process. ● Roles of partners is outlined in the proposal.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does including partners strengthen the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear justification for why & how partners need to be included in the work
Timeline	Typically, at the beginning and during the project.	