

Fiscal Year 2019 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy
Fellowship

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2019 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005447

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

Dates: Applicants must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on February 23, 2018 to eligible Sea Grant Programs.

Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant Program must be received and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 06, 2018.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to the Sea Grant Program in their state one to two months prior to the state application deadline to receive application support and provide notification of an intent to apply. The applicant should allow sufficient time to schedule an interview with the eligible Sea Grant program at the program's request.

Funding Opportunity Description: This notice announces that applications may be submitted for the 2019 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program). The National Sea Grant College Program anticipates funding not less than 35 selected applicants, of which those assigned to the Legislative branch will be approximately 12. Each award will be funded at a total of \$61,500 in federal funding, with the option to add additional funds for fellowship related travel.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Sea Grant Act includes a legislative mandate to provide an educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government for students enrolled in graduate or professional programs that have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. In 1979, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Sea Grant College Program initiated the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program to help fulfill its broad educational responsibilities and meet this legislative mandate. The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program meets NOAA's Mission of "Science, service and stewardship."

B. Program Priorities

N/A

C. Program Authority

33 USC 1123(c) 4(F) and 33 USC 1127 (b) and 15 CFR 917.11(e)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Depending on FY 2019 Congressional appropriations, the quality of applications, and potential host office participation, Sea Grant anticipates funding not less than 35 selected applicants, of which those assigned to the Legislative branch will be approximately 12. Each award will be funded at a total of \$61,500 in federal funding, with the option to add additional funds without further competition for fellowship-related travel.

B. Project/Award Period

Awards are for thirteen months (2/1/2019-2/28/2020) and cannot be renewed or deferred. The final month of the award can be utilized by the Fellow for relocation expenses, and is not intended for Fellows to carry out host office activities or any other fellowship-salaried activities. Pre-award spending may be authorized 150 days prior to the start date of the award.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument will be in the form of a cooperative agreement with each individual Sea Grant Program or Project that will support a selected fellow. The Sea Grant Program receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement on behalf of each fellow selected from their program. The award will be a cooperative agreement because of substantial involvement by the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager in mentoring and hosting successful applicants.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant is any student, regardless of citizenship, who, on February 21, 2018, is enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program, that has an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The graduate degree must be awarded through an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. Territories.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

This is a one-time fellowship opportunity. Applicants that have been selected and notified as a finalist in past years are not eligible to submit an application.

The fellowship will take place in the National Capital region, so applicants must be able to reside in the Washington, DC area. Non-US citizens are responsible for obtaining the appropriate visa to allow them to work in the United States during the fellowship period.

Foreign nationals please note: while this fellowship is open to all eligible students regardless of nationality, a significant number of participating Federal host offices are unable to accept foreign nationals as Fellows. As such, there is a greater likelihood of not receiving a placement in a host office.

Prior contact/arrangements made with possible host offices before the start of the placement week will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application information may be found on Grants.gov, at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html> by searching for Funding Opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2018-2005447. It may also be obtained from the eligible Sea Grant programs.

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

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications must adhere to the provisions listed under "Required Elements" below. The first six elements must be completed and submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program. Failure to do so will result in applications being rejected without review at the state level.

The final required element (7) must be added by the eligible Sea Grant program prior to final submission to grants.gov. All seven "Required Elements" must be submitted to grants.gov by the application deadline; failure to do so will result in applications being rejected without review.

Required Elements - An application package must include:

(1) Two signed letters of recommendation, including one from the student's major professor; if no major professor exists, a faculty member with knowledge of the applicant's academic performance may be substituted.

All applicants will be evaluated solely on their application package according to the criteria listed in Section V. Therefore, letters of endorsement from members of Congress, friends, or relatives will not be accepted. Any letters beyond the two letters of recommendation and the eligible Sea Grant Director's letter will be disregarded by the selection panel.

(2) Personal education and career goal statement emphasizing the applicant's abilities and the applicant's expectations of the fellowship experience in terms of their career development (1000 words or less).

(3) Curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages).

(4) Clear, scanned copy of all official undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.

(5) Listing of classes and/or plans for spring 2018, summer 2018 and fall 2018 (not to exceed one page).

(6) For applicants in a state or territory not served by an eligible Sea Grant program, but applying through an eligible Sea Grant program, a written statement from the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager referring the applicant to the most appropriate eligible Sea Grant program must be included as part of that applicant's application package to the Sea Grant program.

(7) Additional required forms and elements:

- Signed letter of recommendation from the eligible Sea Grant Director, which documents an interview with the applicant and, a placement recommendation for the applicant (legislative or executive)
- Required application documents (SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, CD-511, and budget narrative)
- Required Sea Grant budget forms (90-2 and 90-4; available for download at seagrant.noaa.gov)

The eligible Sea Grant program 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 social security number, date of birth, and student identification number (from transcripts).

This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the Proposal. No reference to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire is required in the proposal.

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/portal/public/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?SID=2dae4a7dcd5848a6364bb94d2d7786dd&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2subtitl eA.tpl>

D. Submission Dates and Times

Eligible applicants must submit application materials by 5:00 p.m. local time on February 23, 2018 to eligible Sea Grant Programs. Applicants enrolled towards a degree in a graduate or professional program in a state or territory served by a Sea Grant Program must submit to that program. Other applicants must submit their applications to the Sea Grant program to which they were referred to by the Knauss Fellowship Program Manager as listed in section VII.

Selected applications from the eligible Sea Grant program are to be received and validated by grants.gov by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 06, 2018. (Note that National Sea Grant Office staff will only be available to answer questions until 5:00 p.m. EDT.) Other than the items listed in Required Element (7) (see section IV. B.), the application submitted to the eligible Sea Grant program by the applicant must be submitted to grants.gov unchanged.

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

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

F. Funding Restrictions

The Sea Grant program receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement of \$61,500 and optional additional fellowship-related travel. Of this amount, the eligible Sea Grant program provides \$47,500 to each fellow for salary/stipend for the first twelve months of the fellowship. Any funds remaining after salary and fringe benefits are accounted for, must first be used to support travel of the fellow to placement week, and then to the other allowable expenses, including health insurance, relocation, academic tuition, and academic- and fellowship-related travel expense. Indirect costs are not allowable from the federal funds either for the fellowships or for any costs associated with the fellowships, including the costs budgeted for placement week (see 15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships").

Successful applicants may be awarded additional funds for fellowship-related travel and

other expenses without further competition.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

At the state or territory Sea Grant review, components of the application will be evaluated with consideration of the following criteria:

- (1) Recommendations and/or endorsements of student (15 percent). For the Knauss Fellowship program the endorsements and content of the letter from the applicant's major professor, and the second letter of recommendation are reviewed on the extent to which:
 - the letters demonstrate knowledge of the applicant and their abilities;
 - the letters speak to the leadership potential, confidence, maturity, and self-direction of the applicant;
 - the letters provide evidence of the applicant's willingness and flexibility to tackle issues beyond their area of expertise and an openness and capacity to expand experience;
 - the letters provide evidence of the applicant's creative thinking, analytical skill, and ability to translate abstract concepts;
 - the letters provide evidence of the applicant's ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts.

- (2) Academic record (15 percent). For the Knauss Fellowship program, the graduate and undergraduate transcripts, as well as the curriculum vitae, are reviewed on the extent to which:
 - the education and experience in the applicant's area of expertise are appropriate to the career stage;
 - the applicant displays strength in academic performance and competitive course grades;
 - records of publications and/or presentations are appropriate to the career stage, field, and institutional setting.

- (3) Statement of career goals of the student (30 percent). For the Knauss Fellowship program, the career goal statement is reviewed on the extent to which:
 - the goal statement is specific, direct, and concise while discussing what the applicant would bring to and gain from the Knauss fellowship;

- how clearly the applicant articulates a career or life goal;
- the goal statement provides evidence of creative thinking, analytical skill, and/or indicates the applicant's capacity and willingness to make connections between science and broader economic, social, and political issues;
- the goal statement demonstrates the applicant's ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts;
- the goal statement includes clear objectives which align with the broader mission of the Sea Grant program and NOAA.

(4) Additional relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; honors and awards; and interpersonal, written and oral communication skills (40 percent total). For the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program, relevant experience would be in marine or aquatic-related fields. The curriculum vitae and career goal statement are reviewed on the extent to which:

- the applicant has employment, volunteer, or extracurricular activities in relevant academic, applied, research, administration outreach, or policy positions;
- the experience in the applicant's area of expertise is appropriate to the career stage;
- the applicant has received relevant honors and awards;
- the applicant has shown interest in working with diverse stakeholders;
- the applicant's experience demonstrates a commitment to apply scientific expertise to serve society;
- the applicant's experiences show prior leadership roles relevant to career stage (e.g., student government, faculty committees, advisory committees, professional societies, community initiatives, etc.).

The application will also be reviewed more generally for clarity (e.g., misspelled words, grammatical errors, undefined acronyms, etc.). At the national review, evaluation criteria are identical to that at the state or territory level, except that in criteria (1), the letter of endorsement from the eligible Sea Grant program director will also be considered.

B. Review and Selection Process

After submission to the eligible state program, and if the application meets the minimum requirements (Required Elements 1-6, section IV.B), the application will be reviewed at the state or territory level. A panel composed of a minimum of three members, will individually discuss each application based on the evaluation criteria listed in section V.A. Following this discussion, an individual score will be provided by each panel member. Once all applications have been discussed and scored, an average score will be computed for each application.

The top scoring applicants will then be submitted by the eligible Sea Grant program to the National Sea Grant College Program for the national review. Each eligible Sea Grant program may select and forward to the National Sea Grant College Program no more than six (6) applications based on the evaluation criteria. In addition, up to six (6) additional applications from each non-Sea Grant state may be submitted by the eligible Sea Grant program handling those applications.

For the national review, a review panel will be assembled to select the fellowship finalists. The panel will include representation from the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, the Sea Grant College Program network, current and/or former Knauss fellows, and other experts. Each panel member is assigned applications to review before the panel meeting. During the panel meeting, panel members will discuss each application based on the evaluation criteria listed in section V.A., as well as the signed letter of endorsement from the eligible Sea Grant Program Director. Following this discussion, scores for each evaluation criteria will be provided by panel members.

Awards will be made in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank based upon one or more of the selection factors described in the next section.

After final selection and announcement of Knauss Finalists, the Selecting Official will place applicants into either the legislative or executive group. Selection of executive and legislative classes will be informed by finalists' stated preference (solicited after the announcement of the finalist class), recommendations from the eligible Sea Grant Program Director and selection panel members, as well as selection factors listed below.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will award in order of average rank unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the following selection factors:

- (1) Availability of funds
- (2) Balance/Distribution of funds:
 - Geographically
 - By types of institutions
 - Across academic disciplines
- (3) Alignment with the National Sea Grant College Program Strategic Plan (which can be found at <http://seagrants.noaa.gov>)
- (4) Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is

authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The eligible Sea Grant Programs will be notified of the competitive selection results in June 2018.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) will notify each unsuccessful applicant by informing the eligible Sea Grant Program Director through which the application was submitted in writing, via e-mail. The state Sea Grant Programs will, in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the NSGO.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

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>.

DOC 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 <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.

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.

UNPAID OR DELINQUENT TAX LIABILITY. Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns. In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

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. 200.205. 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.

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.

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.

C. Reporting

Fellows must submit via email or hard copy their final performance report (summary of accomplishments and activities) to the eligible Sea Grant program by the last day of the fellowship. The eligible Sea Grant program must then submit the financial and final progress reports to the NOAA Grants Office via Grants Online. Financial reports are submitted semi-annually and performance progress reports are submitted annually via Grants Online. Reports may be submitted either electronically or in hard copy.

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.fsr.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

Contact the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Room 11861, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Tel: (301) 734-1088 E-mail: oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

No additional information.