

Request for Proposals:

Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant Regional Competition

2016-2018





REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
MID-ATLANTIC SEA GRANT REGIONAL COMPETITION 2016-2018

Integrated Cross-disciplinary Research on Coastal Community Resilience to
Sea Level Rise and Flooding

***Two – Year Funding Period:
February 1, 2016 - January 31, 2018***

**Pre-proposals due February 4, 2015
Full Proposals due late June 2015**

RESEARCH PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Synopsis

Recognizing that many research questions cross state boundaries, the Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant programs are jointly releasing this request for proposals for collaborative and integrative research across the region that supports the Sea Grant mission. The participating state programs are Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia. Projects must be of regional scope and include investigators from every state. Proposals should address coastal resilience to sea level rise and/or coastal flooding in the region, including but not limited to ecological, physical, economic, and/or social dimensions. Successful proposals will have a cross disciplinary team of partners, demonstrate a high degree of integration, and provide clear mechanisms for regional interaction and coordination. One project totaling up to \$560,000 in Sea Grant funds is expected to be funded (up to \$70,000 per year for two years in each of the four states). 50% non-federal cost match is required for each proposal (\$1 match for every \$2 of Sea Grant funding). The full solicitation with instructions specific to the regional RFP will be maintained at <http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/funding-opportunities>.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

- **Preliminary Proposal (Pre-proposal) Submission:** Required, due February 4, 2015 at 5:00 PM EST to <http://ww2.mdsg.umd.edu/rfp/regional/>
- **Full Proposal Submission:** Required, due late June 2015 (exact date TBD)
- **Application Instructions:** This solicitation contains specific instructions on the format and content that must be adhered to in each proposal. Failure to follow the instructions outlined in the text below is grounds for rejection without review.

Important Notes for Principal Investigators

- Be aware: Deadlines for the Mid-Atlantic RFP may differ from state program RFPs. Late proposals will not be accepted!
- Please contact your state Sea Grant programs early to discuss ideas and the RFP process.
- Funding of all proposals is contingent upon state allocations from NOAA in the FY2016 and FY2017 federal budgets. Modification in the funding and scope of proposals may be made based upon the final program budgets.
- Pre-Proposals will receive external reviews and a panel review for technical feasibility and relevance to the RFP and each of the Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant state strategic plans.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH FOCUS

Sea Grant is a nationwide network (supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]) of 33 university-based programs that work with coastal communities. The network is dedicated to the wise use, management, and conservation of our coastal resources as well as to supporting the science that underpins our understanding of these resources. We support and lead scientific research, education, training, and extension projects designed to foster science-based decisions about the use and conservation of our aquatic resources.

Sea level rise threats to the mid-Atlantic region are critical and growing more urgent. Geophysical and hydrographic conditions result in a relative rate of sea level rise of 3.0-6.0 mm y⁻¹ — approximately double the rate of the northeast or southeast regions — making sea level rise and coastal flooding major issues in the near term for the region (<http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends.shtml>). The region's infrastructure as well as governmental, commercial, military, and personal property are increasingly threatened by rising waters and coastal storms. The near- and long-term consequences for the municipalities, organizations, rural unincorporated areas, and citizens require additional exploration.

Sea Grant programs of the mid-Atlantic region (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia) recognize there are unique threats and challenges from climate change for the Mid-Atlantic region. We are seeking research proposals that support large-scale regional research of relevance to the entire Mid-Atlantic and address current coastal resilience needs.

This competition encourages proposals that integrate across the social and natural sciences to understand the socio-economic and ecological risks from sea level rise and coastal flooding that communities face in the coming decades. Research to improve and expand current flood monitoring technology, develop new technologies and designs, inform coastal adaptation, understand social impacts, and/or translate scientific knowledge to the communities and organizations that can drive change for the benefit of citizens, business, and government agencies is sorely needed. Research initiatives are encouraged that focus on socially and economically vulnerable communities. Proposals that seek to synthesize existing research are also welcome.

Thus for the 2016-2018 funding cycle, the mid-Atlantic Sea Grant programs are seeking research proposals that:

- address coastal resilience to sea level rise and/or coastal flooding in the region, including but not limited to ecological, physical, economic, and social dimensions;
- include a cross disciplinary team of partners; and
- include a PI/Co-PI and funding request from partners in all four states (MD, DE, VA, and NJ).

Projects should address issues of regional scale, but must also be relevant to the investigators' home states (i.e., align with state Sea Grant strategic plans and priorities). Successful proposals will demonstrate strong collaboration and integration between team members in the region.

Updated information on this RFP (e.g., full proposal guidance) will be maintained at Maryland Sea Grant's research funding page: <http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/funding-opportunities>.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

The award period for this regional research project is February 1, 2016 to January 31, 2018. Up to \$560,000 is available for a two-year award, contingent on available federal funds (\$70,000 per year per state budget). The Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant programs require a 50% funding match by state (i.e., the proposal budget for each state must show \$1 of match for every \$2 of Sea Grant funding requested). Only non-federal funds may be committed as matching contribution. Full federally-negotiated indirect cost rates are allowable. We expect to fund one regional project through this RFP.

Within each multi-state proposal, all funded investigators are subject to the funding restrictions in their home state. While the funded regional project should be managed as a single cohesive project, as a practical matter each state team will receive a separate award from their state Sea Grant program. Therefore, teams will submit a single cohesive proposal that includes a separate two-year funding estimate for each state with a description of state specific responsibilities (see pre-proposal format and submission instructions below). Funds from each state are only available to investigators from that state (exception: District of Columbia investigators may be funded by Maryland Sea Grant). Note that pre-proposal estimates are expected to be realistic; a substantial increase in the final budget request will be viewed negatively and will likely result in rejection or budget cuts.

The America Competes Act requires the federal government to ensure that data from federally supported research is accessible to the public. NOAA is requiring Sea Grant programs to have mechanisms in place to meet these data access requirements. As part of the full proposal, PIs will be required to include a section on their "Data Management Plan" in the full proposal. These plans must demonstrate that data are being archived and made available, typically within two years of creation and consistent with federal and university policies. A data management plan will not be required until the full proposal stage; at the pre-proposal stage, PIs should consider if funds are needed for this task and include this in the project pre-proposal and full proposal budgets. More details regarding NOAA and MDSG data management obligations are available in the proposal guidelines and at: <http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/data-management-and-resources>.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs must be affiliated with an academic institution, research laboratory, or non-profit organization in Delaware, Maryland (or the District of Columbia), New Jersey, or Virginia. For each project, at least one PI/Co-PI is required from each state. State-specific guidance is provided in the table below.

Investigators are not encouraged to submit more than one regional pre-proposal on which you are the lead PI, although there is no limit on the number of pre-proposals on which an investigator serves as a co-investigator or collaborator.

State-specific eligibility guidance

Delaware	Extension agents are allowed as Co-PIs, but salary is unallowable in the budget.
Maryland and the District of Columbia	Extension agents are allowed as Co-PIs, but salary is unallowable in the budget.
New Jersey	Extension agents are allowed as PIs/Co-PIs and can include salary in the budget.
Virginia	Extension agents are allowed as PIs/Co-PIs and can include salary in the budget. Research and Education Advisory Committee members are not allowed as PI/Co-PIs on proposals.

IV. SCHEDULE AND DELIVERABLES

A. Preliminary and Full Proposal Schedule

Request for Proposals issued	December 2, 2014
Pre-proposals due	February 4, 2015
Pre-proposals reviewed, PIs notified	Mid-April 2015
Guidelines for full proposals available	Mid-April 2015
Full proposals due	Late-June 2015
Final proposal selection, PIs notified	Mid-September 2015
Omnibus proposal to NOAA	Mid-October 2015
Funding cycle	February 1, 2016 – January 31, 2018

B. Pre-proposal Deliverables and Submission

You must submit one electronic version of the complete pre-proposal online at <http://ww2.mdsq.umd.edu/rfp/regional/> (PDF format only). **The deadline is February 4, 2015 at 5:00 PM EST. The system will shut down automatically at the deadline, locking out late submissions. Pre-proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted.**

To submit a pre-proposal (or full proposal) through our online system, you must do the following:

- Make a PDF of all the required pre-proposal materials.
- Log onto the proposal online submission system at the link above.
- Complete the required fields. **Note: The title for your pre-proposal will also be the title for submitting a full proposal.**
- Upload the proposal PDF using the browse button.
- Press the submit button.

Upon submission, PIs will receive web page and email confirmation. PIs are encouraged to print a copy of this confirmation for their records.

If you do not have web access, please contact the Maryland Sea Grant Office.

V. PRE-PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDANCE

Pre-proposals should present a succinct but sufficiently detailed synopsis of the project in order to evaluate its relevance to the RFP and the Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant program strategic plans, its technical feasibility, and the PIs' qualifications. Pre-proposals are not letters of intent and will be evaluated rigorously in a highly competitive process. Pre-proposals should include a description of the problem (question(s) to be addressed), rationale for the research, methodologies and tools to be used in the effort, and benefits likely to be derived from the anticipated results.

Investigator teams will submit a single cohesive pre-proposal with a single lead PI from one state and co-PIs or collaborators from each of the other states.

A. Pre-proposal Outline

PIs must follow the instructions regarding pre-proposal format as explained in this document or risk pre-proposal rejection.

Each pre-proposal must include the following sections in this sequence:

- Cover sheet
- Project narrative (major headings), 6 page single-spaced limit:
 - Abstract
 - Funding Request
 - Background/Rationale
 - Objectives
 - General Approach and Methods
 - Anticipated benefits
 - Outreach plan
 - Facilities and equipment
 - Personnel description and roles
- References
- Pending pre-proposals to state competitions
- Curriculum vitae, 2 page limit per PI/Co-PI

B. Formatting

Use Arial font type, size 12-point or greater. **Use single spacing**, left justified only, and one carriage return between paragraphs. All margins should be 1 inch. The body of the pre-proposal should be typed continuously (that is, do not start a new page for each new section). The end matter, including the *References*, *Pending pre-proposals to state competitions*, and *Curriculum vitae*, should each start on new pages and are not included in the 6-page single-spaced limit required for the body of the pre-proposal. The first page of the project narrative should be numbered 1, and numbering should continue throughout the proposal. Letters of support are not required, but are allowable after the Curriculum vitae section. Please save the completed pre-proposal as a PDF to upload to our online pre-proposal submission system.

C. Explanation of Pre-proposal Components

COVER SHEET

Include the pre-proposal title and full contact information and state program affiliation for the PIs/Co-PIs on the cover sheet. We do not require that pre-proposals be routed through campus' research administration; however, PIs/Co-PIs should comply with the requirements of their home institutions.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

The body of the pre-proposal (excluding references) is limited to **six pages of single-spaced text and graphics**. Write your pre-proposal using the headings in the sequence listed in this document and following the formatting instructions above. **Clearly indicate in the pre-proposal the roles of investigators from each of the states.**

Abstract

Briefly summarize the proposed project objectives, methodologies, and rationale clearly and concisely. Emphasize the importance, relevance, application, and value to Sea Grant constituents. Limit the abstract to 300 words.

Funding Request

Provide an estimated funding request by state by year for the overall project (note section II. Award Information). This estimate should include a summary of likely expenses, indirect costs, and an estimate of match. A detailed budget and budget justification are not required at the pre-proposal stage, and the budget proposed is non-binding. However, substantial (>10%) deviations from the pre-proposal budget at the full proposal stage are discouraged without prior consultation or guidance. Please note here if Delaware, Maryland or Virginia PIs plan to participate in the separately funded competition to add Graduate Research Fellows to the project. Fellowships will be awarded under a separate competition and are not guaranteed.

Background/Rationale

Indicate the specific problem addressed by the proposed effort and provide sufficient background information to allow a preliminary assessment of the relationship of the problem to the research questions posed in this RFP.

Objectives

State the objectives of the research effort as they would appear in a full proposal. Research hypotheses, if relevant, should be clearly stated.

General Approach and Methods

You need not explain methods in detail. However, readers should be able to make a preliminary determination of the appropriateness of the proposed approach, including statistical analyses, for achieving the stated objectives.

Anticipated Benefits

Describe the results to be achieved by the project and how these results relate to current knowledge of the proposal topic. This section should illustrate both the additional synergistic benefits achieved by conducting an integrated, multi-disciplinary research project, as well as any discipline-specific advancement in the state of knowledge.

Outreach Plan

Discuss how the information generated or technology developed will be transferred to and adopted by a broader community, including government policy makers and resource managers, industry members, citizens, and educators, and how the broader community will benefit. Specific information about the outreach, education, and dissemination strategies to be used to engage and involve end-users at the appropriate stages during the project should be included. Effective outreach begins with early engagement of the people you hope your research will benefit. Some projects may find it highly effective to include outside interests in the development of the pre- and full proposals so that the tools or information gleaned from the research is, in fact, needed and useful to your audience. A detailed discussion of project outreach is available at: <http://www.mdsq.umd.edu/share-your-research>.

Facilities and Equipment

List any facilities or equipment currently available and/or necessary for conducting the project. Give a justification for any equipment requested.

Personnel Description and Roles

List names of PI(s), senior technical staff, outreach staff, and students (if appropriate) and briefly outline their roles in the project.

REFERENCES

List references on a separate page. Reference pages are not included in the six-page maximum for the project description.

PENDING PRE-PROPOSALS TO STATE COMPETITIONS

Provide a title and short (1 paragraph) synopsis of any pre-proposals being submitted by the PI/Co-PIs to state competitions in Delaware, Maryland, or New Jersey. The synopses should indicate any overlap with or connection to the regional proposal.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Provide a **2-page** (maximum) curriculum vita for each of the PIs and Co-PIs. We request you use the National Science Foundation Biographical Sketch format. An example can be found at <http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/proposal-forms-and-worksheets>.

VI. FULL PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDANCE

Investigators interested in submitting a full proposal will have access to "Guidelines for Preparing the Full Proposal," which contains information on content, format, and necessary forms for full proposals. In early spring the Guidelines will be available to download from our web site at: <http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/funding-opportunities>.

VII. PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

Pre-proposals and full proposals will be subject to external peer and panel reviews. Historically, 50 percent of investigators submitting a pre-proposal have been encouraged to submit a full proposal (though all investigators are welcome to do so). One full proposal will be funded. Successful full proposals are forwarded to the National Sea Grant Office for final funding approval. Inclusion of a proposal in the omnibus submission to NOAA does not guarantee final approval or funding.

A. Pre-proposal Review

The Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant programs will lead an extensive review to determine those pre-proposal submissions best qualified to meet the technical and relevancy criteria for the competition. After the review process is completed, Maryland Sea Grant will contact all PIs who have submitted pre-proposals. Those PIs whose pre-proposals review favorably will be encouraged to submit full proposals.

Considerations during pre-proposal review will include, but not be limited to:

- Scientific and technical feasibility of the proposed study
- Relevance to state Sea Grant programs' 2014-2017 strategic plans
- Connections to federal, state, and regional resilience programs and policies
- Principal investigator's expertise and publication record
- Use of collaborative or multidisciplinary teams
- Thoughtful, strategic outreach and communications plans, preferably in consultation with Sea Grant communications and extension professionals in any of the participating programs
- Synergy with existing investments (federal, state, local) in monitoring and infrastructure

Pre-proposals will be evaluated by:

- External mail reviewers
- Extension agents and specialists
- A review panel
- Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant program Directors

B. Full Proposal Review

After full proposals are received, they will be sent out for external electronic peer review. In addition, a technical review panel, consisting of researchers and faculty with expertise in the disciplines represented by proposals under consideration, and an extension agent panel will be convened. Based on the technical panel's own reviews, the extension panel reviews, and the external written reviews, the technical panel will recommend proposals for Sea Grant to consider supporting. The specific criteria for these reviews will be laid out in the full proposal guidelines.

Depending on funding constraints and reviewers' comments, Sea Grant programs may ask PIs to revise their proposed budgets and scope of work.

VIII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to the submitting organization by the Maryland Sea Grant. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised by Maryland Sea Grant as promptly as possible. Anonymous copies of reviews will be provided to the Principal Investigator.

B. Reporting Requirements

As part of all award agreements, Sea Grant programs and NOAA require mandatory yearly financial and progress reports and a final report to evaluate the project. Comprehensive progress reports will be submitted by the lead PI to their home Sea Grant program and each state PI is expected to include his/her specific contributions toward the project within that report. The report must capture the synergistic/ multiplier benefits for the region, the interdisciplinary science, and the state-specific benefits for each participating state. Financial reports will be managed by each state Sea Grant program and the state investigator(s) they are funding. Grant money may be withheld pending completion of reports as outlined in the project terms and award conditions.

IX. CONTACT INFORMATION

Investigators should contact their state Sea Grant programs for more information.

Delaware Sea Grant College Program

Jennifer Merrill, Research Coordinator

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302-831-8087

New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium

Peter Rowe, Associate Director for Sea Grant Administration

732-872-1300 x 31

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Virginia Sea Grant

Susan Park, Assistant Director for Research

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Maryland Sea Grant (RFP Administrative Lead)

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