

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: 2012 National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2012-2002440

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

Dates: Eligible applicants will submit application materials to the State Sea Grant College Programs (SGCP) by 5:00 p.m. local time February 18, 2011. Contact your state SGCP (see IV.A. of the Federal Funding Opportunity for program contact information) for application information. Selected applications from the sponsoring state SGCP are to be received and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline of 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 1, 2011. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. For state SGCP applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy applications will only be accepted if a state SGCP can justify in writing that internet access is not available to them at the time of submission. Hard copy applications need to be received at the National Sea Grant Office no later than the deadline of 5 p.m. EDT on April 1, 2011. Hard copy applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received to establish timeliness.

Funding Opportunity Description: This notice announces that applications may be submitted for the National Sea Grant College Program Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program). The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program is a program initiated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program, in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities and legislative mandate of the Sea Grant Act, to provide an educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government to graduate students in marine and aquatic-related fields. The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program meets NOAA's Mission goal of "Protect, Restore and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources Through Ecosystem-Based Management."

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

In 1979, the National Sea Grant College Program, NOAA, in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities, initiated a program with the objective of providing a unique educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government to graduate students who have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting these resources.

B. Program Priorities

N/A

C. Program Authority

33 USC 1123(c) 4(F) and 33 USC 1127 (b)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

The state SGCP receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement of \$49,000 per student on behalf of each fellow selected from their program. Of this amount, the state SGCP provides \$38,000 to each Fellow for stipend and living expenses (per diem). Of the total cooperative agreement amount, the state SGCP provides \$9,000 to cover mandatory health insurance for the fellow and moving expenses. Any remaining funds of the \$9,000 shall be used for the fellow during the fellowship year, first to satisfy academic degree-related activities, and second for fellowship-related activities. Finally, up to \$2,000 from the total \$49,000 can be used to cover placement week costs. Indirect costs are not allowable from the federal funds either for the fellowships or for any costs associated with the fellowships, including the \$2,000 budgeted for placement week. During the fellowship, the host may provide supplemental funds for work-related travel by the fellow. Not less than 30 applicants will be selected, of which the selected applicants assigned to the Legislative branch may be limited to 10.

B. Project/Award Period

Awards are anticipated to start on February 1, 2012 and run for one year (12 months).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument will be in the form of a cooperative agreement to each individual state SGCP that will support a selected Fellow. 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 18, 2011, is enrolled towards a degree, in a graduate or professional program in a marine or aquatic-related field. The graduate degree needs to be awarded through a United States accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. Territories. Each eligible applicant will need to submit the application information to the state where their institution of higher education is located. Only state SGCPs are eligible to submit applications to the National Sea Grant College Program.

Applicants that have participated in the fellowship in past years will not be eligible to submit an application. This is a onetime fellowship opportunity.

Applicants from states not served by a state SGCP should contact the National Sea Grant College Program; subsequently, the applicant will be referred to the appropriate state SGCP. All applicants should consult the state SGCP before submitting an application to it

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

N/A

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

N/A

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application information may be obtained directly from Grants.gov. It may also be obtained from the state SGCP directors. The addresses of the state SGCP directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web (<http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html>).

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications by state SGCP to the National Sea Grant College Program must adhere to the provisions under "Applications" and the six requirements under "Required Elements" by the deadline of 5 p.m. EDT on April 1, 2011. Failure to follow these requirements will result in applications being rejected without review.

Applications: Applicants from states not served by a state SGCP should contact the National Sea Grant College Program; subsequently, the applicant will be referred to the appropriate state SGCP. All applicants should consult the state SGCP before submitting an application to it.

Required Elements - An application must include:

- (1) A signed letter of endorsement from the sponsoring state SGCP Director
- (2) Two signed letters of recommendation, including one from the student's major professor; if no major professor exists, the faculty person academically knowing the applicant best may be substituted.
- (3) A personal education and career goal statement emphasizing the applicant's abilities and the applicant's expectations from the fellowship experience in the way of career development (1000 words or less). Placement preference in the Legislative or Executive Branches of the Government may be stated; this preference will be honored to the extent possible.
- (4) Personal and academic curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages).
- (5) Copy of all official undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.
- (6) Listing of classes and/or plans for spring 2011, summer 2011 and fall 2011 (not to exceed one page).

All applicants will be evaluated solely on their application package according to the criteria listed below. Therefore, letters of endorsement from members of Congress, friends, relatives and others will not be accepted. Applicants are not required to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire in their applications.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Eligible applicants will submit application materials to the State Sea Grant College Programs (SGCP) by 5:00 p.m. local time February 18, 2011. Selected applications from the sponsoring state SGCP are to be received and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline of 5

p.m. EDT on April 1, 2011. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. For state SGCP applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy applications will only be accepted if a state SGCP can justify in writing that internet access is not available to them at the time of submission. Hard copy applications need to be received at the National Sea Grant Office no later than the deadline of 5 p.m. EDT on April 1, 2011. Hard copy applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received to establish timeliness.

D. Intergovernmental Review

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

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect costs are not allowable from the Federal funds either for the Fellowships or for any costs associated with the Fellowships, including the \$2,000 budgeted for placement week. (15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships").

F. Other Submission Requirements

Each state SGCP may select and forward to the National Sea Grant College Program no more than six (6) applications based on the evaluation criteria. Prior contacts/arrangements made with possible host offices before the start of the fellowship will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process

Application information may be obtained directly from Grants.gov. It may also be obtained from the state SGCP directors. The addresses of the state SGCP directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web (<http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html>).

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

- 1 Recommendations and/or endorsements of student (15 percent total):

Endorsement/content of the letter from the applicant's state Sea Grant Program Director, the applicant's major professor, and the second letter of recommendation.

2 Academic record and statement of career goals and objectives of student (45 percent total): Quality of the applicant's personal education and career goal statement (30 percent); Strength of academic performance (15 percent).

3 Quality of project and applicability to program priorities. The Knauss Sea Grant Fellowship Program does not use this criterion (0 percent).

4 Additional relevant experience (40 percent total) related to: diversity of education, extra-curricular activities, honors and awards, and interpersonal, written, and oral communications skills. For the Knauss Sea Grant Fellowship Program, relevant experience would be in Marine or aquatic-related fields.

5 Financial need of student. The Knauss Sea Grant Fellowship Program does not use this criterion (0 percent).

B. Review and Selection Process

Each step in the selection process both at the state level and national level are based on the evaluation criteria listed in section V. A. At the state level, a panel composed of three members, all from the state SGCP, will individually discuss each application. 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 by the state SGCP. The top scoring applicants will then be submitted by the state SGCP to the National Sea Grant College Program for the national review.

For the national review, a review panel will be assembled to select the fellowship finalists. The panel will include representation from the Sea Grant Association, the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, and the current class of Fellows. Each panel member is assigned applications to review before the panel meeting. During the panel meeting each application will be individually discussed. Following this discussion, an individual score for each evaluation criteria will be provided by each panel member. Once all applications have been discussed and scored, an average score will be computed for each application by the Sea Grant Knauss program manager or designee. In general, the applicants will be selected based on the average score; however, the selecting official may select lower scored applicants based on the selection factors below. The top scoring applicants will then be placed into either the legislative or executive group by the selecting official based upon the applicant's

stated preference, the application materials submitted, and the individual comments of the panel members.

C. Selection Factors

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

1. Balance/Distribution of funds:
 - a. Across academic disciplines
 - b. By types of institutions
 - c. Geographically
2. Availability of funds
3. Program-specific objectives
4. Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification to the Sea Grant programs will be completed by May 27, 2011. Funds are expected to be awarded by approximately February 1, 2012, the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The National Sea Grant College Program will notify, via e-mail, each unsuccessful applicant by informing the state SGCP through which the application was submitted. This email will contain a written summary of the review panel comments. The state SGCPs will,

in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the National Sea Grant College Program. The applications that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed one year after submission date.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). You may obtain a copy of these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at:
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html>

The National Environmental Policy Act: As defined in Sections 5.05 and Administrative or Programmatic Functions of NAO 216-6, 6.03.c.3, this is a fellowship project for which there are no cumulative effects. Thus, it has been categorically excluded from the need to prepare an Environmental Assessment.

Limitation of Liability: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project.

C. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and performance reports (summary of accomplishments and activities) are to be submitted to the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager. Financial reports are semi-annual and performance reports are annual. Reports may be required to be submitted either electronically or in hard copy.

VII. Agency Contacts

Contact Miguel Lugo, Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Room 11828, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Tel: (301) 734-1077 ext 1075

VIII. Other Information

N/A