

2024

COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND DIGITAL COAST FELLOWSHIP

Fellow Eligibility and Selection

Eligibility

Any U.S. citizen who will complete a master's or other advanced degree at an accredited U.S. university between August 1, 2022, and July 31, 2024, is eligible to apply for the Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowships. Students from a broad range of programs are encouraged to apply. A variety of degrees are applicable to the fellowship because the projects are new and different each year.

To read about the 2024 projects, visit [Coastal Management Fellowship projects](#) and [Digital Coast Fellowship projects](#) in early December 2023. Previous fellows have had degrees in environmental studies, natural resource management, marine affairs, marine science, geology, public affairs, communications, social sciences, and regional land management. The most important prerequisite is an interest in coastal issues. Students who are not U.S. citizens or who attend non-U.S. institutions are not eligible.

All applications must include the following items:

1. Resume or curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages using 12 point font).
2. Statement of the applicant's goals with emphasis on what the applicant expects from and can contribute to the fellowship experience. This should also include how the fellowship can help reach goals that may be difficult to reach without the fellowship opportunity. Include any obstacles that have been overcome to reach this point in your academic career (500 words or less).
3. Two letters of recommendation, including one from the applicant's principal professor. If no principal professor exists, the faculty member who is most familiar with the applicant's academic work may be substituted.
4. Unofficial copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.

Any additional materials submitted will not be considered in the selection process. If you are selected as a finalist, an additional writing sample will be requested.

How to Apply

Application packages must be submitted to the Sea Grant program office in the state where you earned your degree by January 26, 2024. Each Sea Grant program office may select and forward up to four applications to NOAA for review. In order to increase diversity in the fellowship, Sea Grant may submit one additional application from a candidate who attended a [minority serving institution](#), for a total of five. The fifth nomination spot is reserved solely for minority serving institution candidates.

Applicants from states not served by a Sea Grant program office should contact the [fellowship coordinator](#) for more information on [submitting an application](#).

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Selection of Finalists

From the nominations submitted by Sea Grant directors, 18 finalists will be selected by a panel. Final decisions will be made by March 22, 2024, and all applicants will be notified of the decision by the end of the following week.

Finalists will be selected using the following criteria::

- Statement of the applicant's goals. How well does it emphasize what the applicant expects from and can contribute to the fellowship experience? Does it address how the fellowship can help reach goals that may be difficult to reach without the fellowship opportunity? Consider any obstacles the candidate may have overcome.
- Diversity of educational background and quality of academic performance
- Candidate experience, including life experience, internships, volunteer experience, extracurricular activities, and jobs
- Scholarships, awards, honors, and acknowledgements
- Support from two letters of recommendation, including one from the applicant's principal professor. The letters should demonstrate knowledge of the applicant and their abilities.

Placement of Fellows

The Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowship matching process will take place in two parts in late April 2024. First, program orientation by NOAA, project presentations by the hosts, and presentations by the finalists will be conducted virtually the week before the in-person portion of the matching workshop. Sessions will be live but will also be recorded for those that may miss a session.

The following week, in-person interviews will take place in Charleston, South Carolina. The finalists will be brought to the in-person portion at the expense of NOAA. Before the workshop begins, each of the finalists will be able to review the fellowship projects on the fellowship website. Each of the selected host organizations will send the fellow mentor to the placement workshop. No contact between prospective hosts and finalists should be made prior to the placement workshop. Candidates and hosts will submit their top choices of placement to NOAA, and NOAA will match fellows with hosts.

Of the finalists selected in 2024, up to seven will be placed with a state coastal program and up to three will be placed with a Digital Coast partner. If a host does not find a suitable candidate during the matching process, it will be given the option to defer fellow placement for one year. Hosts will only be allowed one deferment before they have to reapply.

For more information on the 2023 state projects, visit coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/coastalmanagement.html.
For more information on the 2022 Digital Coast projects, visit coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/digitalcoast.html.
Contact the fellowship coordinator with any questions at ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov.



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Fellowship Projects

Host Agency: Association of State Floodplain Managers (in partnership with the Coastal States Organization)
Location: Madison, Wisconsin
Project Title: Coastal No Adverse Impact: Promoting Higher Standards to Enhance Community Resilience
Project Goal: Develop tools and trainings for local practitioners to facilitate the implementation of best practices in local floodplain and coastal management, thereby reducing flood risk and enhancing community resilience to coastal flood hazards.

Host Agency: San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Location: San Francisco, California
Project Title: Environmental Justice in Permitting at the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Project Goal: Ensure that environmental justice principles are implemented into the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's permitting process, reducing the probability of future harm to disadvantaged communities.

Host Agency: California Coastal Commission
Location: San Francisco, California (or a district office)
Project Title: Advancing Offshore Wind Energy Development in California through Sound Science and Meaningful Engagement
Project Goal: Develop policy guidance documents, identify mitigation strategies, and plan and implement outreach strategies critical to the long-term implementation of the California Coastal Commission's offshore wind program in concert with the agency's existing environmental justice and tribal consultation policies.

Host Agency: CNMI Division of Coastal Resources Management
Location: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Project Title: CNMI Comprehensive Wetlands Management Plan Update and Stakeholder Coordination
Project Goal: Collaborate closely with key stakeholders to update the 1991 Saipan Comprehensive Wetlands Management Plan, and further integrate wetland spatial, ecological, and functional data and analysis for other CNMI islands to transform it into a CNMI-wide comprehensive wetlands management plan.

Host Agency: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Location: Hartford, Connecticut
Project Title: Connecticut Coastal Access Fellow
Project Goal: Spearhead a multipronged approach for addressing coastal public access needs in Connecticut through an equity and environmental justice lens.

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Fellowship Projects

Host Agency: Georgia Coastal Management Program
Location: Brunswick, Georgia
Project Title: Strategically Enhancing Georgia's Resiliency through a Multi-faceted Approach
Project Goal: Develop an outreach and education strategy for coastal resiliency in Georgia by determining needs of unique communities, and work with the Georgia Coastal Management Program to implement the strategy.

Host Agency: Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Chesapeake and Coastal Service
Location: Annapolis, Maryland
Project Title: Maryland Climate Adaptation Workforce: Building Capacity for Nature-Based Solutions and Adaptive Management
Project Goal: Develop data-led adaptive management approaches to guide transparent state investments in resilient, nature-based restoration projects based on site-level project successes. Advance support for adaptation industries by helping to build Maryland's coastal natural resource-based workforce.

Host Agency: The Nature Conservancy
Location: Florida Keys or coastal Georgia
Project Title: Aligning Floodplain Conservation with the FEMA Community Rating System's Existing Incentives for Protection of Open Space
Project Goal: Use The Nature Conservancy and Digital Coast resources related to the Community Rating System and nature-based solutions more broadly to help achieve The Nature Conservancy's 2030 conservation goals along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the U.S., while improving the resiliency of coastal communities to climate change.

Host Agency: Washington Department of Ecology Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program
Location: Olympia, Washington
Project Title: Improving Shoreline Public Access in Washington's Coastal Zone
Project Goal: Develop resources and tools for Washington that support the use, preservation, and expansion of shoreline public access, with a focus on increasing equity and environmental justice.

For more information on the 2024 Coastal Management Fellowship projects, please visit the website at coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/coastalmanagement.html. For more information on the 2024 Digital Coast Fellowship projects, please visit the website at coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/digitalcoast.html. Contact the fellowship coordinator at ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov with any questions.



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2024 Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowship

WHAT is it?

- A fellowship established to provide on-the-job education and training opportunities in coastal resource management and policy for postgraduate students.
- A two-year opportunity that offers a competitive salary, medical benefits, and relocation and travel expense reimbursement.
- A program that matches postgraduate students with state coastal resource agencies and nonprofit organizations to work on projects proposed by the hosts and selected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

WHO is eligible?

- Any student completing a master's or other advanced degree from an accredited U.S. university between August 1, 2022, and July 31, 2024. Students must also be U.S. citizens. Students from a broad range of programs are encouraged to apply.
- Application packages are due to your local Sea Grant director by January 26, 2024.

WHERE can you get information?

- Contact the fellowship coordinator at ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov
- Visit the fellowship website at www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship
- Contact your local Sea Grant director at www.seagrant.noaa.gov/About



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What degree program does someone need to complete to be eligible for the fellowship?

A: For the 2024 fellowship, applicants must complete a master's or other advanced degree between August 1, 2022, and July 31, 2024, to be eligible. We encourage candidates from a broad range of degree programs to apply for the fellowship because the projects are new and different each year. Previous fellows have had degrees in environmental studies, natural resource management, marine affairs, marine science, geology, public affairs, communications, and regional land management. The most important prerequisite is an interest in coastal issues.

Q: What criteria do the Sea Grant directors use when choosing to nominate a candidate?

A: The Sea Grant directors evaluate applicants based on a face-to-face or phone interview. They look for applicants who demonstrate a strong interest in coastal management, life experiences, internships, extracurricular activities, or jobs in coastal activities, and have a proven ability in interpersonal, oral, and written communication.

Q: What is the length of a fellowship project?

A: Fellowship projects are two years long. For instance, the 2024 fellowship will start in August 2024 and end in August 2026. Newly selected fellows are given the opportunity to visit their host organizations prior to the start of the fellowship to meet the staff at their host organization and to look for housing.

Q: Can the fellowship hosts nominate someone for a fellowship position?

A: Fellowship hosts cannot nominate anyone to be a fellow on their project. Hosts and fellows are selected independently of one another and then matched up through a mutual interview process. Contact between applicants and hosts is not allowed. Applicants are encouraged to read about the fellowship projects on the website or to contact current fellows and ask them questions about their position or experience.

Q: Does the place where applicants live or go to school determine what project they are eligible for?

A: Not at all. Applicants are eligible for any of the projects regardless of where they live or have studied.

Q: What is the salary for the Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowship?

A: The current salary is \$42,000 per year. In the second year of the fellowship, a locality pay factor may be added to the salary, depending on the location of the fellowship. (over)



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Q: How do fellows get paid?

A: All of the benefits, including salary, are administered by an outside contractor through a contract with NOAA.

Q: What other benefits, in addition to salary, are included as part of the fellowship?

A: Health insurance, worker's compensation, relocation stipend, and travel reimbursement.

Q: How much relocation reimbursement do fellows receive?

A: Fellows will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 to move to their fellowship location and up to \$1,000 to move at the end of the two-year fellowship. If relocation is not required or the fellowship is not completed, relocation reimbursement will not be provided.

Q: How much travel reimbursement do fellows receive?

A: Coastal Management Fellows will be reimbursed up to \$8,400 for professional development and travel over the two-year fellowship. A portion of this money must be used to travel to specific meetings and conferences required by the fellowship program. These include a summer fellowship meeting, the Social Coast Forum, and the Coastal GeoTools Conference. Digital Coast Fellows are provided up to \$11,600, and are required to attend two in-person Digital Coast partnership meetings in addition to the three required meetings mentioned above. Fellows may use the remainder of these funds at their discretion to attend conferences, workshops, or trainings (prior approval from NOAA and their host organization is required). Any travel requested by the fellowship host, such as travel required to complete the fellowship project or travel to the host organization's annual conference, must be covered by the host and should be considered when budgeting for hosting a fellow.

Q: Do fellows have contact with each other during the fellowship?

A: The fellows see each other in person at three events throughout their fellowships—the Social Coast Forum, the Coastal GeoTools Conference, and a fellowship meeting. Fellows also connect with each other through regularly scheduled virtual gatherings, including meetings, trainings, and social happy hours. The quarterly fellowship newsletter, Fellow News, also helps fellows learn more about each other and their work.

Q: Where have previous fellows gone on to work?

A: Fifty-eight percent of fellows accepted positions with state government as their first post-fellowship job. Others accepted positions with the private sector (8 percent), the federal government (13 percent), nongovernmental organizations (8 percent), local governments (3 percent), academia (5 percent), and 5 percent went back to school.

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Q: Does the fellowship have a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) value statement?

A: Yes, the four NOAA Office for Coastal Management fellowship programs share a DEIJ value statement. “Our office is committed to making coastal fellowships accessible to all interested and eligible candidates, allowing all fellows to be comfortable in their identities and participate fully in their fellowships, and removing barriers to becoming part of the next generation of coastal leaders.”

Q: How does the fellowship define diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice?

A: Diversity¹: there are many different kinds of diversity, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, physical, or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity.

Equity²: the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Inclusion¹: being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and quantitative representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation, with a true sense of belonging and full access to opportunities.

Justice³: the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys: the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards; and, equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

1: from Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation Race Reporting Guide

2: from Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985).

3: from the US EPA's definition for environmental justice

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What's new in 2022?

Q: What happened during the fellowship pause in 2021?

A: The fellowship team conducted a “refresh” of the program in 2021 with the help of fellowship partners, including state coastal management program managers and mentors, Digital Coast partners, Sea Grant partners, and former fellows. This group developed the recommendations listed here.

Q: What changes were made to the host requirement?

A:

- The \$15,000 host match does not have to come from non-federal funds.
- Project proposals must describe how the project will consider diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or justice in the project proposal.
- Project proposals must describe how staff at the host office are working (e.g., in the office, telework, or some combination), how the host intends the fellow to work, and how they will ensure the fellowship experience is successful in this work environment.

Q: What changes were made to the candidate requirements?

A:

- The goal statement should include what the candidate expects from and can contribute to the fellowship experience. This should also include how the fellowship can help reach goals that may be difficult to reach without the fellowship opportunity. The candidate should include any obstacles that have been overcome to reach this point in their academic career.
- To be eligible for the fellowship, candidates must have completed their latest degree no more than two years prior to the fellowship start date. For the 2024 fellowship, eligible candidates must have completed their degree between August 1, 2022, and July 31, 2024. This was increased from the former limit of 1.5 years.

Q: What changes were made to Sea Grant's role?

A:

- Sea Grant nominates candidate applications to NOAA. In 2023, Sea Grant programs can nominate up to three candidates from their state. In order to support an increase in diversity in the fellowship, Sea Grant may submit one additional application from a candidate that attended a minority serving institution, for a total of four. The fourth nomination spot is reserved solely for minority serving institution candidates.

