NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science

Competitive Research Program

NCCOS | NATIONAL CENTERS FOR COASTAL OCEAN SCIENCE

Funding Opportunity: NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2026-32955

"Harmful Algal Bloom Innovation Challenge: Toxin Detection in Seafood"

Program Managers

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NCCOS Competitive Research Program

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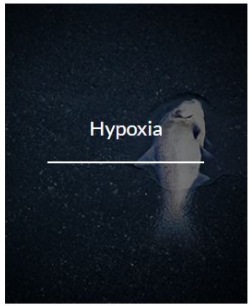
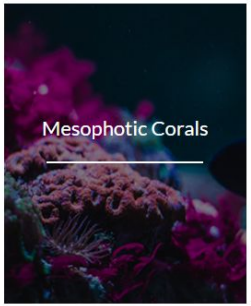
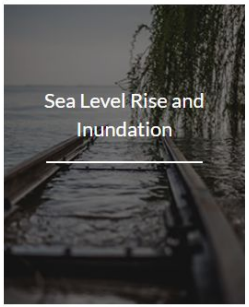
NCCOS CRP supports the development of actionable information and tools that improve how the nation protects, manages, and conserves ocean and coastal ecosystems.







NCCOS CRP funds projects that provide **actionable information** and **user-driven products** that enable resource managers to **assess management and policy strategies**, and to **improve understanding** of threats to ecosystems and communities.

Collaborative research process – resource managers, planners, policymakers, and impacted communities are **partners** or **advisors** on research projects.

Research outcomes must benefit society.

CRP Funding for Harmful Algal Blooms

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- **Harmful algal blooms (HABs)** occur when a high concentration* of marine or freshwater algae, macroalgae, or cyanobacteria results in nuisance conditions or harmful impacts on marine and freshwater ecosystems, subsistence resources, communities, or human health through the production of toxic compounds or other biological, chemical, or physical impacts of the bloom.
- NOAA is authorized to administer peer-reviewed, merit-based, competitive grant funding by the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABHRCA; 33 U.S.C. § 4002).
- **Programs**: ECOHAB - MERHAB - PCMHAB** - SEAHAB - HABER
- **Overarching objective**: To support the creation of actionable data, innovative tools, and essential products that facilitate the implementation of effective management and policy strategies. These outcomes are specifically designed to safeguard public health and ecosystems while promoting the economic vitality of affected communities.

* In relation to baseline or abundances observed during non-bloom or non-nuisance conditions, or in the absence of harmful impacts

** FY2026 Funding opportunities are currently open

For more information on CRP's HAB programs, visit
https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/crp/our-external-hab-portfolio/

Funding Opportunity
HAB Innovation Challenge: Toxin Detection in Seafood

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Overall goals:

- Drive **practical** and **cost-effective innovations** for HAB toxin detection in seafood, promoting seafood safety, food security, and the economic success of U.S. seafood industries and their competitiveness in global markets
- Accelerate the **development and advancement of innovative, efficient, and effective point-of-use HAB toxin detection technologies** in support of U.S. nutritional, cultural, and economic seafood interests, and to reduce costs to U.S. communities and industries that rely on safe seafood.

[NOFO Section I.A. Program Objective, p.2]

Funding Opportunity Definitions

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Point-of-use testing performed at the site where a product or material will be harvested or consumed, rather than at a centralized or remote laboratory. This differs from other testing methods primarily in its location and immediacy. Point-of-use testing for seafood safety is analogous to point-of-care testing in a clinical or healthcare setting.

Seafood includes wild and farmed ocean and coastal organisms harvested for human consumption for commerce, recreation, or subsistence.

Subsistence the customary and traditional use of fish, wildlife, or other freshwater, coastal, or marine resources by any individual or community to meet personal or family needs, including essential economic, nutritional, or cultural applications.

[NOFO Section I.A. Program Objective, p.6]

Funding Opportunity Priorities

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REQUIRED - All proposals must address the primary objective of developing or advancing the detection of HAB toxins in seafood

AND address at least one of the following priorities:

- Adaptation of a current toxin detection technology to make it more rapid, portable, or cost-effective.
- Evaluation of adapted or novel toxin detection technologies (e.g., single or multiple laboratory validation studies, matrix, or platform extension studies) for improved speed, accuracy, and cost over currently available methods.
- Development, demonstration, or validation of novel detection technologies for HAB toxins in seafood.

OPTIONAL - NCCOS/CRP may prioritize proposals addressing:

- Detection of paralytic shellfish or ciguatera toxins in seafood
- Methods that are matrix-independent or capable of detection across multiple seafood matrices

Public-private-academic partnerships are encouraged, but not required.

[NOFO Section I.B. Program Priorities, p. 5]

Funding Opportunity
Key Requirements

- Identify the HAB toxins that will be detected
- Identify the intended users of the detection technology (e.g., community members, local scientists, government agencies, industry, etc.)
- Describe how the new or improved technology would better serve user needs compared with methods that are currently available (e.g., increased portability that allows field applications or point-of-use detection, reduced costs for businesses or regulatory laboratories).

[NOFO Section I.B. Program Priorities, p. 6]

Funding availability & award info

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- Expect to fund 2 - 5 projects as cooperative agreements (pending appropriations)
- *Anticipated start date: March 1, 2027*
- Project duration: 1 - 3 years
- **Annual budget per project: $100,000 - $250,000**
- Maximum total budget per project: $750,000

- NCCOS/CRP emphasizes a **collaborative research** process involving resource managers, planners, policymakers, private sector partners, and impacted communities as research project partners or advisors.
- Projects selected for funding will work with their Program Manager to form a Management Technical Advisory Group (MTAG).

[NOFO Section I.B. Program Priorities, p. 6; Section II. Award Information, p. 7]

Eligibility: Who can apply?

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U.S. institutions of higher education, non-profits, state and local governments, tribal government entities, U.S. Territories, U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands institutions, and for-profit organizations

- Federal applicants (including NOAA) are eligible provided legal authority exists for the Federal applicant to receive funds from another agency for the proposed research
- PIs must be employees of an eligible entity and applications must be submitted through that entity - Non-Federal researchers should comply with their institutional requirements for application submission
- Foreign researchers must apply as subawards or contracts through an eligible U.S. entity
- NOAA/NCCOS researchers may apply through an eligible U.S. entity, but cannot be the lead PI on the application
- NOAA Federal salaries will not be paid
- No cost sharing or matching requirements

[NOFO Section III. Eligibility Information, p. 9]

Required Letter of Intent (LOI)

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1. Tentative project title
2. Identify lead PI and provide contact info for all PIs
3. Approximate total cost of the project
4. Statement of the problem and its relevance
5. Brief summary of work to be completed
    a. NOFO objective addressed
    b. Methodology to be used, and
    c. How it will be transitioned to HAB management application

Applicant(s) who do not submit an LOI are not eligible to submit a full proposal.

LOI Review

Is the proposed research responsive to FY2026 HAB Innovation Challenge Program Priorities?

LOIs must be submitted to nccos.grant.awards@noaa.gov on or before 11:59 pm ET April 14, 2026

Responses will be emailed ~1 week after LOI is received.

Full proposals encouraged only for relevant & competitive LOIs

[NOFO Section IV.B.1. Required Letter of Intent, p. 11] - *2p, Single spaced, 12-pt, 1" margins*

Full Application/Proposal

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1. Standard Form (SF)-424
2. Summary Title Page
3. One-page Abstract/Summary
4. Project Description (17p)
   a. Proposed Research
   b. Application to Management
   c. Data Management Plan
5. References cited
6. Milestone Chart
7. Biographical Sketch
8. Current & Pending Support
9. Permits
10. Standard Form (SF)-424A Budget Form for Lead & Subawards
11. Budget Narrative
12. CD-511
13. Standard Form (SF)-424B
14. List of Collaborators (spreadsheet)

Full proposals must be submitted to grants.gov BEFORE 11:59 pm ET May 14, 2026

[NOFO Section IV.B.4. Required Elements for Full Applications, p. 11] - *Single spaced, 12-pt, 1" margins*

https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/about/funding-opportunities/application-forms/

Evaluation Criteria

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1. Importance/relevance and applicability to program goals/priorities (45%)
2. Technical/scientific merit (30%)
3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10%)
4. Project costs (10%)
5. Outreach and education (5%)

   Demonstrate how you will interact with end users to ensure that collaboration Is maximized between PIs and end users and that the research results are optimized for utility by end users

Timeline

LOIs DUE: On or before April 14, 2026

LOI responses: ~ 1 week from submission

Full proposals DUE: May 14, 2026

Panel Review: Summer 2026

Notification: On or before March 2027

Project Start Date: March 1, 2027

[NOFO Section V.A. Evaluation Criteria, p. 19-23]

Advice for Applicants

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Read the NOFO, read the NOFO, read the NOFO!

Focus on the Program Priorities [Section I. B., p. 5]

Contact a Program Manager if you have any questions, especially on:

- Applicability of your topic to funding opportunity goals and priorities
- Eligibility of applicant or institution
- Preparing the budget, budget narrative or any other federal forms

★ Register or verify registration with SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons ASAP

Submit your LOI by email on or before the deadline – **April 14, 2026**

Submit the proposal through Grants.gov BEFORE the deadline, **May 14, 2026**

If you are not submitting a proposal and have related expertise, please consider serving as a reviewer.

Questions?

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Letters of Intent (LOI) Due 11:59 pm ET April 14, 2026
Send to nccos.grant.awards@noaa.gov

Full Proposals Due 11:59 pm ET May 14, 2026
Submit on grants.gov

Quick reference guide for NCCOS CRP applications:
★ https://cdn.coastalscience.noaa.gov/page-attachments/funding/General-Quick-Reference-Guide-for-NCCOS-CRP-Applications-Jan25.pdf

Forms & example application package:
https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/about/funding-opportunities/application-forms/

Send additional questions to:
Sarah Pease (HABER Program Manager) at sarah.pease@noaa.gov
Maggie Broadwater (ECOHAB Program Manager) at maggie.broadwater@noaa.gov
NCCOS Grants Administrator at nccos.grant.awards@noaa.gov