

# 2022

## COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND DIGITAL COAST FELLOWSHIP

### Call for Proposals

The NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship and Digital Coast Fellowship Programs match postgraduate students with state coastal resource agencies and Digital Coast Partner organizations to work on specific projects for two years. The program provides fellows with professional mentoring and training, and provides fellowship hosts with technical assistance to help them manage the coast effectively.

#### Eligibility

For the Coastal Management Fellows, all states and U.S. jurisdictions with federally approved coastal zone management programs may submit a project proposal to NOAA to compete for selection as a fellowship host. Multiple state agencies or organizations with partnered implementation of the state's coastal management program are also eligible. States and territories that currently host a first-year fellow are not eligible to apply for a second fellow. Up to nine project proposals will be selected for the 2022 class of fellows.

For the Digital Coast Fellows, all eight Digital Coast Partnership organizations may submit a project proposal to NOAA to compete for selection as a fellowship host. Organizations may partner with each other to develop a proposal, but one main host organization and mentor must be specified. Up to three project proposals will be selected for the 2022 class of fellows.

#### Application Requirements

Applicants must submit a proposal of no more than eight pages that addresses the following, using this [template](#).

1. **Background and Introduction** – Define the problem, the need for the project, and how it will add value to the host organization. Digital Coast projects must also identify how the project will add value to the Digital Coast and the partnership.
2. **Goals and Objectives** – Provide project goals and quantifiable objectives.
3. **Milestones and Outcomes** – Highlight specific target milestones, timelines, and products or services to be completed within the two years of the fellowship.
4. **Project Description** – Detail the specifics of the project (no more than 3 of the 8 pages).
5. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice** – Demonstrate how the project has considered and will advance the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.
6. **Fellow Mentoring** – Discuss how the host agency will incorporate the fellow into staff activities and encourage the fellow's professional development. Discuss how the mentor will provide day-to-day supervision and on-the-job education to the fellow. The mentor should be identified by name in the proposal.
7. **Office Environment** – Describe the current and future plans for work status in your office (staff in the office vs. teleworking), and what is intended for the fellow.
8. **Project Partners** – Provide a summary of existing efforts and how the project will integrate these efforts.
9. **Cost-Share Description** – Discuss how the host will provide the \$15,000 fellowship match.
10. **Strategic Focus Area** – Discuss how the proposed project addresses one or more of the strategic focus areas:

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### *Healthy Coastal Ecosystems*

Healthy coastal ecosystems provide many important benefits, including valuable habitat, enhanced water quality, reduced impacts from severe storms and flooding, and economic benefits related to fisheries, recreation, and tourism.

### *Resilient Coastal Communities*

Coastal communities are among the most densely populated in the nation and are increasingly at risk from climate change.

### *Vibrant and Sustainable Coastal Economies*

Coastal and ocean economies are a major engine for the national economy. Included are a wide range of sectors, from energy and security to tourism and recreation. These industries co-exist within a relatively small area, and many depend on healthy coastal ecosystems.

### **Selection Criteria**

Projects will be selected using the following criteria:

1. **Project Value** – To what degree:
  - will the project add value to the host organization?
  - does the proposal describe clear anticipated benefits of the project to the organization?
  - [for Digital Coast projects] will the project also add value to the Digital Coast and the partnership group?
2. **Project Approach** – To what degree:
  - is the proposed project approach feasible?
  - are goals and deliverables defined?
  - is the proposed approach well-defined and achievable within two years?
  - is the host committing resources to the successful completion of the project (software, expertise, training, and other resources)?
  - does the proposal describe how the mentor will support the fellow?
3. **Value to Fellow** – To what degree:
  - will the project provide a professional development experience for the fellow?
  - will the host contribute to the fellow's professional development and educational experiences?
4. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ)** – Does the proposal discuss how DEIJ was considered in the development of the project?
5. **Strategic Focus Area** – How well does the project address one or more of the Office for Coastal Management's strategic focus areas listed in the application requirements. Digital Coast priorities will be considered when selecting Digital Coast Fellowship projects.

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### **Project Selection**

Up to nine state projects and up to three Digital Coast partner projects will be selected from the proposals submitted to NOAA. The selection panel will be made up of program partners, current and former fellows, and current and former mentors. In addition to the review criteria, certain program policy factors may be considered when selecting projects. An attempt will be made to disperse the state projects geographically, and technical experts may be brought in to evaluate the technical content of the proposals. The selection panel will make its recommendation to the division chief of the Learning Services Division at the NOAA Office for Coastal Management, who will make the final decision.

### **Cost Share**

All organizations selected to host a fellow will be required to provide \$15,000 in matching funds to cover a portion of the fellow's salary (\$7,500 for each year of the fellowship). This money must be cash and cannot be in-kind support. The source of the \$15,000 cost sharing must be defined; if the source of this funding is not defined, the proposal will not be considered. In the past, these funds have had to come from a non-federal source, but that is no longer a requirement. The funds can be either federal or non-federal funds.

Over the two-year fellowship, fellows will be provided with funding to attend Coastal Geo Tools, the Social Coast Forum, and a fellowship meeting in Charleston. Digital Coast Fellows will also be provided with funding to attend two Digital Coast partnership meetings. Fellows are also provided up to \$7,200 for professional development funds over the two-year fellowship. Fellows may use 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.

### **Placement of Fellows**

The Coastal Management and Digital Coast Fellowship matching process will take place in two parts in late April 2022. 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 24 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 24 finalists selected in 2022, up to nine 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.

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### Timeline for 2022-2024 Fellowship Programz

Friday, October 15, 2021	Proposals due from hosts
Tuesday, November 30, 2021	Projects selected
Friday, January 21, 2022	Applications due from candidates to their local Sea Grant
Friday, February 18, 2022	Endorsements due from Sea Grant
Friday, March 18, 2022	Finalists selected
Monday-Friday, April 18 to 22, 2022	Matching workshop presentations - virtual
Monday-Friday, April 25 to 29, 2022	Matching workshop interviews in Charleston
Monday, August 1, 2022	Fellowship begins

### How to Apply

Please email a signed electronic copy of the proposal to [ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov) with "Coastal Management or Digital Coast Fellowship Proposal - host" as the subject.

To see examples of state projects that were selected in 2020, please visit [coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/stateprojects.html](http://coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/stateprojects.html). To see examples of Digital Coast projects that were selected in 2020, please visit [coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/digitalcoast.html](http://coast.noaa.gov/fellowship/digitalcoast.html).



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### 2022 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, 2020, and July 31, 2022. 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 21, 2022.

#### WHERE can you get information?

- Contact the fellowship coordinator at [ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.fellowships@noaa.gov)
- Visit the fellowship website at [www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/fellowship)
- Contact your local Sea Grant director at [www.seagrant.noaa.gov/About](http://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 2022 fellowship, applicants must complete a master's or other advanced degree between August 1, 2020, and July 31, 2022, 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 writing their letters of endorsement?**

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 2022 fellowship will start in August 2022 and end in August 2024. 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.

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**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.

**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: Fellows will be reimbursed up to \$7,200 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. Any additional travel related to their project will be reimbursed by the host.

**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: **Diversity**<sup>1</sup>: 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.

**Equity**<sup>2</sup>: 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.

**Inclusion**<sup>1</sup>: 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.

**Justice**<sup>3</sup>: 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.

**Q: What changes were made to the host requirements?**

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 2022 fellowship, eligible candidates must have completed their degree between August 1, 2020, and July 31, 2022. 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 2022, they can nominate up to four 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 five. The fifth nomination spot is reserved solely for minority serving institution candidates.

