

NCCOS FY 2025 Regional Ecosystem Research Funding Opportunity

[NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2025-28604](#)

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NCCOS Competitive Research Program

- Supports the development of actionable information and tools that improve how the nation protects, manages, and conserves ocean and coastal ecosystems.
- Funds **regional-scale and targeted research** through a **competitive** peer-reviewed process.
- Research focused on:
 - Harmful Algal Blooms
 - Hypoxia
 - Coastal Change (sea level rise and ocean acidification)
 - Regional Ecosystems (ecosystem-based management, mesophotic coral ecosystems, habitat and coral ecosystem connectivity, multi-stressors)

Regional Ecosystem Research (RER) Program

Addresses key regional research needs that are limiting the ability of resource managers to address one or more issues from a **regional ecosystem perspective**.

FY 2025 RER Program Funding Opportunity

- **Focus:** Understanding Species' Habitat Usage and Connectivity in and around Marine Protected Areas
- **Partnership:** NCCOS Competitive Research Program and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and National Marine Protected Area Center.
- **Goal:** Provide resource managers with actionable information that can be addressed more readily in MPA management plans and resource protection measures.

Definitions

Connectivity

Exchange of materials, organisms, and genes within and across geographic space.

- **Types of Connectivity:**
 - Genetic
 - Oceanographic
 - **Demographic/Ecological** (exchange of individual propagules, juveniles, and adults)

Definitions

Marine Protected Area (MPA)

A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM)

A geographically defined area other than a protected area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity with associated ecosystem functions and services...

FY 2025 Funding Opportunity Priorities

Using management relevant species (i.e., commercial, recreational, keystone, foundational, and/or ecologically important species) as exemplars or models in the selected MPA or MPA network,

- a. **Characterize temporal and spatial connectivity** (between locations) of species to document the reliance of species with differing requirements on essential habitats, physical processes, connectivity corridors, and environmental conditions.
- b. **Determine the extent to which MPA boundaries or networks are sufficient** to encompass these essential habitats, processes, and environmental conditions.
- c. **Identify, characterize, and assess climate induced and other anthropogenic pressures** influencing organismal connectivity and/or movement, site fidelity, habitat utilization, and behavior in and around MPAs.
- d. **(optional) Document processes and mechanisms by which an MPA benefits populations and communities in areas outside its boundaries** (e.g., post-recruitment spillover, larval dispersal, and protection of spawning aggregation sites or other critical areas).

Key Requirements

- Address **management relevant species** - commercial, recreational, keystone, foundational, and/or ecologically important species.
- Address **MPA and/or OECM** (other effective area-based conservation measures).
- Located in an **MPA or MPA network under U.S. Jurisdiction** (includes U.S. territories and the Great Lakes).
- Establish a **Management Transition Advisory Group (MTAG)** composed of resource managers and other prospective end users of the research project outputs. **Purpose of MTAG:** Ensure effective collaboration with end users and transition of research results.
- Articulate **outcome-based management** goals.

Optional

- Encourage the inclusion of sites in and around sites across the National Marine Sanctuary System (incl. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument).

Project Funding and Duration

- Expect to fund 2 projects (pending appropriations).
- Annual Budget per project = \$500,000
- Project Duration = 3-4 years
- Maximum Total Budget per project = \$2,000,000
- Project start dates should be September 1, 2025.
- No cost sharing or matching requirements.

Who can apply?

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

- Federal applicants are eligible. NCCOS researchers cannot be the lead institution.
- Non-NOAA Federal applicants must have legal authority to accept funds for this type of research.
- Foreign researchers may apply as subawards through an eligible U.S. institution.
- NOAA supports cultural and gender diversity and encourages women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications.
- Applications involving Historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, Asian American and Native Pacific Islander-serving institutions, and institutions that work in underserved areas are encouraged.

Full Proposal

- There is **no Letter of Intent (LOI)**. Only full proposals are required.
- Full proposals have 14 required elements.

1. Standard Form (SF)-424
2. Summary Title Page
3. Abstract/Project Summary
4. Project Description
 - a. Proposed Research
 - b. Application to Management
 - c. Data Management Plan (Limit = 2 pages)
 - d. Equitable Science and Service Delivery Plan (Limit = 1 page)
5. References Cited
6. Milestone Chart
7. Biographical Sketch (for each PI and co-PI)
8. Current and Pending Support (for each PI and co-PI)
9. Permits (if none, say so)
10. SF-424A (One for the lead institution and each subaward/subcontract)
11. Budget Narrative (One for the lead institution and each subaward/subcontract)
12. CD-511
13. SF-424B
14. Alphabetized Collaborator List (One Excel Spreadsheet for all PIs emailed to nccos.grant.awards@noaa.gov)

Limit = 20 pages

Full Proposals
 must be submitted to [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) by
January 23, 2025
 at **11:59 PM Eastern Time**

Equitable Science and Service Delivery Plan

Applicants should describe how the proposed project and project team will accomplish the following actions to support equitable science and service delivery:

- 1) Create an inclusive and accessible environment that broadens the participation of underrepresented groups; and
- 2) Advance awareness, accessibility, and overall societal impacts of the proposed science for relevant users of all disciplines and backgrounds, including those that have been historically underserved, as applicable.

Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- **partnering with underserved communities** to ensure relevant science, services and tools reach decision-makers;
- pairing research science with **socioeconomic and or environmental justice data**;
- **co-producing knowledge and products with decision-makers**;
- **partnering with minority serving institutions** or programs that promote diversity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM);
- **having a diverse project team and MTAG** across several factors (e.g., sectors, age, career stage, gender, ethnicity, ability, lived experience, problem solving styles, geography, etc.);
- **encouraging diverse perspectives** from project team members and partners; and or fostering an inclusive environment that empowers, engages and values the unique attributes of all team members.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (30%)
2. Technical/scientific merit (30%)
3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10%)
4. Project costs (10%)
5. Outreach and education (20%)
 - **Plans for communicating and disseminating the results** of research in ways that are appropriate to inform the relevant management entities that will use the results of the proposed work.
 - **Demonstrate how the applicant will interact with end users** to ensure that collaboration is maximized between PIs and end users and the research results are optimized for utility by end users.

Submitting your Proposal

- It is a 3 step process.
- You will get up to 3 email messages from Grants.gov
- Email message:
 1. **(within 2 days)** Confirmation receipt of the proposal by the Grants.gov system
 2. **(within 2 days)** Will indicate if the proposal has been successfully validated by the system before transmission to NOAA or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated proposals are sent to NOAA for review. **Check your eRA Commons Recent/Pending submissions, if there are errors there will be a box that says “Show Errors and Warnings.”**
 3. **(within 2 days)** When the proposal has been received and been downloaded by NOAA.

Advice to Potential Applicants

- **Read the Funding Opportunity.** This presentation is only the highlights.
- Start the submission process to Grants.gov at least 2 weeks before the deadline of **January 23, 2025 at 11:59 PM ET.**
- Contact the Program Manager or the Grants Coordinator if you have any questions, especially on:
 - Applicability of your topic to program goals.
 - Eligibility of applicant or institution.
 - Preparing the budget, budget narrative or any other federal forms.

FY 2021 RER Funded Projects

Note: The [FY 2021 Funding Opportunity](#) is similar to the [FY 2025 Funding Opportunity](#) but has slightly different objectives.

- [Assessing Multi-species Habitat Use and Connectivity of Marine Protected Areas in the Gulf of Maine](#)
- [Determining Habitat Requirements and Connectivity for Reef Fishes in the Gulf of Mexico](#)
- [Using Data on Reef Fish Foraging in Seagrass Beds to Design Better MPAs](#)

Summary

- Slides and the recording will be posted at <https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/crp/regional-ecosystem-research/>
- Funding Opportunity: [NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2025-28604](#)
- **Full proposals Due January 23, 2025 at 11:59 PM** Eastern Time
- **Email** nccos.grant.awards@noaa.gov to let us know you've submitted an application to Grants.gov
- [Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [Information for Applicants](#)
- Additional Questions, contact:

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