



Ocean Odyssey Grants:

Marine Debris Awards For Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility

Are you part of a community group and/or institution that is underserved, underrepresented, or overburdened by marine debris? Is your community group and/or institution looking to create positive change by addressing issues caused by marine debris?

Funding Opportunity Overview

The [National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](#), in cooperation with the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Marine Debris Program](#) is excited to offer awards to support communities that are underserved, underrepresented, or overburdened and to promote initiatives that investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris across the coastal United States, Great Lakes, territories, and Freely Associated States.

Funding Availability and Eligibility

Awards between \$5,000 - \$7,500
The Foundation anticipates funding 10-15 projects.

The objective of the Marine Debris awards for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA) is to further DEIJA initiatives to address and investigate the adverse impacts of marine debris by supporting marine debris prevention, research, monitoring, detection, response, removal, and coordination activities.

Funding is available for non-federal organizations (individuals are not eligible). U.S. Native American Tribes, Alaska Native communities, Native Hawaiian communities, and U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States are encouraged to apply. There is no match requirement. Only applicants from the United States, territories, and Freely Associated States are eligible to apply.

Implementation Period

April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025
Projects should span 12 months.

Application Package Due

Monday, December 18, 2023
11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time

Please see the [Marine Debris Award Application Template](#) for more information.



Background

Marine debris is a widespread problem that can impact all of us in a multitude of ways. Marine debris can threaten human health and safety; reduce the quality of life in coastal areas; degrade habitats; cause economic loss to tourism, fisheries, and maritime activities; and injure and kill marine wildlife due to entanglement or ingestion. Marine debris can take many forms, including items that come from activities that take place on land, such as plastic bags, cigarette butts, foam take-out containers, and balloons, as well as ocean-based items, such as derelict fishing gear and abandoned vessels. Marine debris is primarily the result of human actions, such as ineffective or improper waste management, dumping, and littering, or contamination of stormwater runoff. Fishing gear may be lost as a result of storms, accidents, or improper disposal, and become marine debris. You can learn more on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program's [What is Marine Debris](#) webpage.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (the Foundation) in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program is offering awards to support communities that are underserved, underrepresented, or overburdened and to promote initiatives that investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris.

The Foundation and the NOAA Marine Debris Program are committed to providing funding opportunities across the coastal United States, Great Lakes, territories, and Freely Associated States. For over 10 years, this partnership has leveraged the public-private partnership to enhance America's ability to address impacts of marine debris and to support our sanctuaries and monuments. These activities are in alignment with the Department of Commerce and NOAA's goal to support Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA).

Overview of Funding Opportunity

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, in cooperation with the NOAA Marine Debris Program, will offer awards to support communities that are underserved, underrepresented, or overburdened and to promote initiatives that investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris. Awards will range between \$5,000 to \$7,500 per project. There is no non-federal match requirement. Interested parties may learn more about eligibility, project specifications for each objective, and application requirements in the following sections.

Objective

The objective of the Ocean Odyssey Marine Debris Awards for DEIJA competition is to further DEIJA initiatives to address and investigate the adverse impacts of marine debris by supporting marine debris prevention, research, monitoring, detection, response, removal, and coordination activities.

- Potential projects could include (but are not limited to):
 - Support for marine debris removal events;
 - Small-scale removal of marine debris that impacts the livelihood, cultural and historical resources, or well-being of the targeted group or the natural resources on which they depend;
 - Experiential learning opportunities and field trips that emphasize marine debris science, prevention, or removal;
 - Curriculum development;



- Marine debris detection, monitoring, and assessment;
- Response exercises to increase resilience to marine debris influx events;
- Coordination activities, such as:
 - Technical assistance
 - Support for Marine Debris Action Plan activities (please see the NOAA Marine Debris Program [regional action plans page](#) for more information or contact your local Regional Coordinator from the NOAA Marine Debris Program [contact page](#));
 - Tool development for marine debris identification, education, etc.
 - Workforce development such as marine debris-related internships, research opportunities, and skills-based training.

The timeline of project activities should be clearly addressed in the applicant's proposal. Project proposals that do not address whether work can be completed within the noted timeline will not be rated as highly in the review process. Grant duration should be 12 months.

Priorities

Preference will be given to:

- Projects that directly benefit or support communities in need and involve community members in all aspects of the project, from planning to execution;
- Projects that include an evaluation plan to assess impact (measurable outcomes preferred);
- Projects that can be completed in 12 months;
- Proposals that can demonstrate impact on the period of performance;
- Projects that include plans to persist beyond the funding period.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for project activities taking place in the coastal United States, Great Lakes, territories, and Freely Associated States are state, local, Tribal, and Territory governments whose activities affect research or regulation of marine debris. Equally eligible are schools, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, or organizations with expertise in a field related to marine debris. Applicants who have not previously received funding from the Foundation are strongly encouraged to apply. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Only applicants from the United States, territories, and Freely Associated States are eligible to apply.

Competitive awards will incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility when writing their proposals and performing their work. In addition, priority will be given to projects that directly benefit or support communities in need and involve community members in all aspects of the project, from planning to execution.

When possible, please use the White House Council on Environmental Quality's [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) to determine whether any known project locations take place in disadvantaged communities. We recognize this tool does not cover all burdens or lack of resources for all Tribal and/or underserved communities, especially for Territories and Freely Associated States. In cases where CEJST does not identify a community where project activities will occur as disadvantaged, applicants may include their own determination of underserved communities based on similar burdens or lack of resources. This may include, but



is not limited to, a description of the community’s previous or current access to resources, community history, power, values, or how they have been historically marginalized and/or overburdened. There are other tools and platforms available for consideration, including the [Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Screen](#) tool. Equivalent state-sponsored or localized tools may also serve as justification/description.

How To Apply

Application packages should be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on **Monday, December 18, 2023**. Email application packages to RFP@marinesanctuary.org. Send your email, with letters of support attached, with the subject line: Marine Debris Award Application: [Name of Organization].

Application packages should include:

- Completed Proposal
 - Download the [Marine Debris Award Application Template](#) here
- Letter(s) of support from community organizations and/or community leaders (this is required if the proposal is reliant on outside partners)

Determinations will be made by **Monday, December 18, 2023**, and applicants notified shortly thereafter.

Evaluation Criteria

The technical review and evaluation process will be graded by the following point system. Each proposal will be subject to a technical review process and evaluated on the objectives and priorities stated above.

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-Questions	Score	Scoring for this criterion will be assessed on how well proposals:
DEIJA	<p>Does the proposal clearly describe how the proposed work incorporates diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility?</p> <p>Does the proposal describe proposed activities taking place in Tribal and/or underserved communities whether a portion of the benefits will flow to those communities and how those benefits will be measured?</p> <p>Does the proposal describe how project activities will minimize identified barriers?</p>	30	Demonstrate how the project will involve and/or benefit disadvantaged communities that have been underserved, underrepresented, or overburdened as defined in the CEJST , the Environmental Protection Agency’s EJ Screening tool , or equivalent tools.



<p>IMPORTANCE, RELEVANCE, APPLICABILITY</p>	<p>Do project activities take place in the coastal United States, Great Lakes, territories, or Freely Associated States?</p> <p>Does the proposal clearly and impactfully identify and address a marine debris issue?</p> <p>Are the proposed activities adequately described and do they fit the objective of the competition?</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>Explain the project activities and how they align with the competition objective.</p> <p>Clearly state the purpose of the project and the specific marine debris issue being addressed; summarize planned activities; and benefits to the environment and local economy; and indicate the project scope.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this project clearly identify and address a marine debris issue? • To what extent will the project impact the local community and environment? • Are the project’s scale, scope, and planned activities appropriately matched to the intended outcomes and budget of the project?
<p>TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PROJECT FEASIBILITY</p>	<p>Does the proposal clearly identify reasonable goals and objectives?</p> <p>Is the proposal feasible in the period of performance timeframe?</p> <p>Is a descriptive timeline included?</p> <p>Do the applicant and any project partners have the ability and expertise (or the potential) to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work?</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>Demonstrate a thorough level of planning that will allow the applicant to begin the project promptly and complete the project within the period of the performance timeline. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are milestones identified in the project timeline that align with project goals and objectives? • Are project partners and roles clearly identified? • Are letters of support included from project partners? • Do activities take place during the implementation period?
<p>PROJECT EVALUATION PLAN</p>	<p>Does the applicant list specific project metrics, indicators, and outcomes?</p> <p>Does the project clearly indicate how progress will be evaluated and success determined?</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Specific project metrics, indicators, and outcomes are included that align with project activities</p> <p>Explain how these outcomes (quantitative and qualitative) will demonstrate the project’s success.</p>
<p>PROJECT COSTS</p>	<p>Is the budget realistic?</p> <p>Does the budget have a meaningful use of funding?</p> <p>Does the budget description sufficiently explain how each item in the budget table supports project activities?</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Provide a detailed list of specific items, tools, materials, etc., and associated costs for each expense category. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are explanations provided for how each item in the budget table supports project activities? • Are budgeted items prioritized that directly support projects and/or workforce development and capacity-building



	*Please note that projects with budgets that prioritize direct costs over indirect costs may be more competitive.		opportunities (program staff salary, fringe, and indirect budget requests are relatively small fractions of the total budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are budgeted items prioritizing direct support and benefit Tribal and underserved community members?
SCALABILITY AND LONGEVITY POTENTIAL	What is the long-term scalability and longevity of the proposed activities? Is there potential for the project to continue to benefit the community and/or support outcomes after the completion of the project?	5	Describe project scalability. Demonstrate the potential for the project activities and/or project outcomes to continue beyond the funding period.
Total Points	100		

Grant Logistics

Expected Timeline (broken down by month)	2023			2024												2025			
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4		
Request for Proposals Submission Open All proposals must be submitted from October 24, 2023 - December 18, 2023.																			
Technical review of proposals Proposals will be reviewed and scored during January and February 2024.																			
Notification, Agreements, and Release of Funds All applicants will be notified of award status on or around the end of February. Funds will be released once grant agreements are signed and returned to the Foundation.																			
Period of Performance All projects must be completed between April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025.																			
Final Report Final reports are due to the Foundation by April 30, 2025.																			



Additional Information

For questions and additional information, please email RFP@marinesanctuary.org.

About Us

The [National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](#) was founded in 2000 by America's most influential ocean conservation leaders and works with communities and NOAA to conserve and expand these special places for a healthy ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. Sanctuaries and monuments are our essential network of protected waters, owned by every American and championed by us. Connected by currents, they sustain miraculous species, coastal communities, and our shared heritage. The Foundation is a leading voice for U.S.-protected waters, and our work extends from the ocean floor to the classroom to Capitol Hill. The Foundation supports a growing portfolio of Community Stewardship, Outreach, and Education programs aimed at providing students, educators, and lifelong learners with opportunities to explore and discover connections to the natural world, no matter where they live.

The [NOAA Marine Debris Program](#) was authorized by Congress in 2006 to serve as the U.S. Federal government's lead for addressing marine debris. The NOAA Marine Debris Program, authorized in the Marine Debris Act, codified at 33 U.S.C. § 1951 et seq., supports the development and implementation of locally-driven marine debris assessment, removal, and prevention projects that benefit coastal habitats, waterways, and marine and Great Lake resources. The NOAA Marine Debris Program achieves its mission through six main pillars: Prevention, Removal, Research, Monitoring and Detection, Response, and Coordination. Staff are positioned across the country to support projects and partnerships with state and local agencies, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry. In striving to learn and better support all communities, the NOAA Marine Debris Program provided staff training on diversity and inclusion and initiated an evaluation of and updates to federal funding opportunities to reduce barriers to the application and receipt of grants.

The Marine Debris Awards for DEIJA project was created in cooperation with the Foundation under a cooperative agreement with the [NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries](#).

Definitions

Accessibility means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

Diversity is a collection of individual attributes that together help organizations achieve objectives.

Equitable means 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.

Freely Associated States include the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Inclusion is a culture that connects each person to the larger organizing structure.



Outreach is a one-way communication approach, where the grantee is sharing information with an underserved community, but there is no confirmation if they received the message and interpreted it as intended.

Marine debris is defined as any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned in the marine environment or the Great Lakes.

Marginalization is a social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or “mainstream” society. This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Marginalized groups or people are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life. As a result of exclusionary practices, marginalized groups are underrepresented in these spheres.

Meaningful engagement refers to an intentional exchange between the applicant and the underserved community where both have multiple opportunities to ensure the other is correctly understanding each other’s perspectives and ideas. This will ensure the Tribal and/or underserved community is an integral part of the visioning, decision-making, and/or leadership for project activities that may affect their environment and/or health and wellbeing.

Underserved communities include populations who receive inadequate or inequitable services, who experience quality-of-life disparities, and who by design have little power or influence over outside decisions that impact their daily quality of life (e.g. schools qualifying for or organizations working with student populations supported by Title 1 funds).

Terms and Conditions

This is a Request for Proposals (RFP) only. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate the Foundation to make an award or pay for costs incurred by potential offerors in the preparation and submission of an offer. In addition:

- (a) The Foundation may cancel RFP and not award;
- (b) The Foundation may reject any or all responses received;
- (c) Issuance of RFP does not constitute award commitment by The Foundation;
- (d) The Foundation reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow RFP instructions;
- (e) The Foundation will not compensate offerors for a response to RFP;
- (f) The Foundation reserves the right to issue an award based on an initial evaluation of offers without further discussion;
- (g) The Foundation may negotiate with short-listed offerors for their best and final offer;
- (h) The Foundation reserves the right to order additional quantities or units with the selected offer or;
- (i) The Foundation may reissue the solicitation or issue formal amendments revising the original RFP specifications and evaluation criteria before or after receipt of proposals;
- (j) The Foundation may modify the specifications without issuing a formal notice to all offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the RFP;
- (k) The Foundation may choose to award only part of the activities in the RFP or issue multiple awards based on multiple RFP activities; and



(l) The Foundation reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.