

## Purpose

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (Foundation), in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (NOAA Ocean Exploration), is proud to announce a funding opportunity to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts related to ocean literacy and workforce development. The overarching goal is to advance ocean exploration learning opportunities by investing in projects and partners that support the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) workforce development pipeline and engage diverse learners from communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented in ocean science and exploration across the U.S. states and territories. These grants are for use by educators and/or education program implementers for the advancement of diverse learners (in middle school, high school, undergraduate, and/or community college) through projects that reduce or minimize historic barriers to the field. Priority is for proposals that support ocean exploration learning and student opportunities, address historic barriers for entry into ocean science and exploration career fields, utilize NOAA educational resources, and demonstrate student impact within the short funding period.

## Overview

### Background

The Foundation and NOAA Ocean Exploration share a common goal to engage and inspire the next generation of ocean explorers in ways that are equitable and inclusive to learners of all backgrounds. To help achieve this goal, while simultaneously recognizing limited support for underserved and/or underrepresented communities to engage in ocean science and exploration career pathways, the DEIA Ocean Exploration Education Grants project launched in 2021 to invest in the workforce development pipeline where barriers are most prohibitive to recruitment and retention of diverse learners.

### Need

The DEIA Ocean Exploration Education Grants project seeks to address the need to support and encourage STEAM education/identity for students from underserved and/or underrepresented communities, and to build the capacity for their STEAM educators to bring ocean science and exploration alive in the classroom and beyond. To increase inclusivity and build diversity, it is critical for STEAM education programs to intentionally engage with student groups lacking representation in STEAM fields. For example, this [2021 report](#) by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology noted clear racial, ethnic, and gender gaps throughout the STEM workforce of NOAA and other federal agencies. As described by the [2016 report](#) by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM), it is imperative to increase diversity within the STEM workforce to advance science and innovation, keep up with a rapidly growing STEM career field, and live up to the civil service foundation of the Federal workforce by providing opportunities for the diverse population served by the same agencies. Increasing DEIA within our organizations and the broader STEAM workforce are priorities for NOAA Ocean Exploration and the Foundation. This project aims to support initiatives and build partnerships with others seeking to fill these gaps and scale-up ideas promoting stronger connections between DEIA and ocean exploration as it relates to ocean literacy or workforce development.

## Objectives

Proposals must focus on **ocean literacy** and/or **workforce development** projects that:

- I. Build the capacity for STEAM educators to bring ocean science and exploration alive for diverse learners;
- II. Advance or create new ocean exploration learning opportunities for middle school, high school, undergraduate, and/or community college students in historically underserved and underrepresented communities;
- III. Support development of STEAM education/identity for students historically marginalized from ocean science and/or exploration careers; and,
- IV. Establish and strengthen ocean exploration partnerships with organizations working at the intersection of STEAM education and DEIA.

Examples of potential projects could include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Ocean Literacy:** Incorporation of ocean exploration educational content into programming (use of NOAA's data and/or educational resources will be prioritized).
- **Workforce development:** Development and implementation of student programs that foster STEAM skill development, professional development opportunities that build capacity for educators to incorporate ocean exploration into the classroom, and/or sponsorship of competitive learning challenges to promote skills-based training for ocean exploration careers.
- **Other Student Opportunities:** Funding for internships, research opportunities, attendance of conferences and/or workshops.

## Funding Availability

DEIA Ocean Exploration Education Grants will be offered in the range of \$10,000 - \$20,000 for new proposals.

Previous DEIA Ocean Exploration Education Grant recipients (FY22) may apply for up to \$7,500 of additional funding to support program improvements that increase the long-term financial sustainability of the funded project, beyond the grant period.

## Period of Performance

January 1, 2023 - July 30, 2023 (7 months of grant implementation). There will **not** be an opportunity for selected grantees to request to extend the period of performance. Projects can end prior to July 30, but cannot extend past that date. Proposals should clearly address the timeline of all project activities. Projects that are unclear whether work can be completed within the noted timeline will not be rated as highly in the review process.

## Eligibility

Grant applicants are limited to organizations supporting ocean exploration learning opportunities for diverse students. Proposals should focus on one or more of the targeted age groups, including: middle school, high school, undergraduate, and/or community college students.

For the purpose of this grant opportunity, applications will be accepted from all nonprofits, state, and local entities, excluding federal agencies, which support educational, service, and/or coordination activities for diverse learners within the middle school, high school, undergraduate, and/or community college range. *Post-secondary institutions are eligible to apply as Key Personnel working under a Program Director who has programmatic experience serving children and youth (e.g. through a school district or community-based organization).*

If partnerships are crucial to the success of the project, Letter(s) of Support from the partnering organization(s) **MUST** be submitted with the proposal.

## How to Apply

Submit DEIA Ocean Exploration Education Grant proposals and additional support documents using the Foundation's [Grant Proposal Template](#) by **November 7, 2022** to [rfp@marinesanctuary.org](mailto:rfp@marinesanctuary.org). Determinations will be made by December 1, 2022 and applicants notified shortly thereafter.

## Useful Resources

[NOAA Ocean Exploration Education Resources](#)

[Deep Ocean Education Project Website](#)

[Ocean Literacy- Overview and Guide](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion at NOAA](#)

[National Marine Sanctuary Strategic Plan \(2022 - 2024\)](#)

## Additional Information

Please direct any questions to [rfp@marinesanctuary.org](mailto:rfp@marinesanctuary.org).

## Review Process

### Evaluation Criteria

The technical review and evaluation process will be graded by the following point system:

- Does the proposal support DEIA in STEAM and address historic and/or current barriers in the STEAM workforce pipeline preventing diverse learners from underserved and/or underrepresented populations from entering ocean science or exploration careers? *Worth a maximum of 30 points out of 100.*
- Does the proposal advance ocean literacy and/or support STEAM workforce development in historically under-represented populations? *Worth a maximum of 20 points out of 100.*
- Does the proposal support student or teacher engagement in ocean exploration science? *Worth a maximum of 15 points out of 100.*
- Is the proposal feasible in the period of performance timeframe? *Worth a maximum of 10 points out of 100.*
- Does the proposal include plans to measure student (or educator) impact and outputs? *Worth a maximum of 10 points out of 100.*
- Is the budget realistic and have a meaningful use of funding? *Worth a maximum of 10 points out of 100.*
- Does this proposed project lend itself to long term sustainability? *Worth a maximum of 5 points out of 100.*

Each proposal will be subject to a technical review process and evaluated on the objectives and criteria stated above. Priority will be given to proposals that incorporate NOAA resources and can demonstrate student impact in a relatively short period of time. Both proposals that provide short-term opportunities for large groups of students and those that include in-depth, immersive opportunities for small student groups are welcomed.

### Definitions for terms for clarity:

- **Underserved audiences:** 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. *Schools qualifying for or organizations working with student populations supported by Title I funds.*
- **Underrepresented audiences:** Populations that identify as one or more of the following racial or ethnic minority groups (Blacks or African Americans; Hispanics or Latinos; American Indians or Alaska Natives, and Native Pacific Islanders) based on their representation in STEM education or employment being smaller than their representation in the U.S. population. *Additionally projects may focus on women in STEAM and populations with limited access to ocean exploration resources due to geographic barriers, such as rural, inland communities.*
- **Ocean literacy:** the understanding of the ocean's influence on you - and your influence on the ocean. An ocean-literate person understands the essential principles and fundamental concepts about the functioning of the ocean; can communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way; and is able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources.

## About Us

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, founded in 2000 by America's most influential ocean conservation leaders, 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 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.

NOAA Ocean Exploration is dedicated to exploring the unknown ocean, unlocking its potential through scientific discovery, technological advancements, partnerships, and data delivery. We are leading national efforts to fill gaps in our basic understanding of the marine environment, providing critical ocean data, information, and awareness needed to strengthen the economy, health, and security of the United States and the world. The Ocean Exploration Education Grants project was created in cooperation with the Foundation under federal award NA21OAR0110474.