

Resilience Specialists

Contractual services for seven resilience specialist positions to provide technical assistance and grant management support for NOAA partners

Purpose

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is requesting proposals from a contractor to hire and manage seven full-time Resilience Specialist positions to support the NOAA Office of Coastal Management, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (Foundation), and Climate Resilience Regional Challenge (Resilience Challenge) grant recipients and partners.

Overview

Project Background

Under Federal Award NA25NOSX473C0136, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is working with the NOAA Office of Coastal Management to build resilience and engage communities through information sharing, national convenings, and technical assistance. As part of these efforts, the Foundation seeks to contract with a company to hire seven Resilience Specialists who will work with Resilience Challenge grantees to provide technical advice and assistance. The day-to-day work of the Resilience Specialists will be embedded with NOAA Office of Coastal Management staff.

Period of Performance

The contractual arrangement should be valid from August 1, 2026–September 30, 2029.

Scope of Work

NOAA requires technical expertise and assistance for resilience projects, including the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge, through September 30, 2029. This support will be provided by contracted staff located across the country who will coordinate with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, NOAA staff, and other NOAA contractors.

Seven full-time Resilience Specialists are required in the following locations:

- Anchorage, AK (one individual)
- Oakland, CA (two individuals)
- Traverse City, MI (one individual)
- Kittery, ME (one individual)
- Charleston, SC (one individual)
- Fort Pierce, FL (one individual)

As this effort evolves, NOAA and the Foundation may revise the required locations and the tasks identified in the next section.

Travel will be required for each Resilience Specialist and is estimated not to exceed 20% of their time.

Resilience Specialists will be provided with a government laptop and must pass the government background screening process.

Description of Work

The Foundation requires staff to provide targeted technical assistance to Resilience Challenge grant recipients and other partners. Contract staff will work collaboratively with OCM's regionally based staff as part of the Regional Resilience Technical Assistance (TA) Team.

Staff will be assigned to specific Resilience Challenge projects and will be responsible for providing grant management support and technical assistance directly to project partners based on their expertise and partner needs. While staff are expected to devote the majority of their time and effort to their assigned projects, they will also support other resilience projects around the country based on their expertise and project requests for assistance.

As needed, staff may be asked to provide technical support for grants administration to projects to which they are not regularly assigned. Several staff members will also be needed to serve in program-wide roles that provide national support (i.e., beyond assigned projects in their region).

Technical assistance needs and delivery methods will vary by project and are expected to evolve over the project life cycle.

Inherently governmental roles

Contract staff will not perform inherently governmental roles, which involve decisions related to budget, staffing, policy, and priorities. Staff may be asked to provide input or subject-matter knowledge on matters that could affect Foundation or NOAA priorities.

Tasks:

Resilience Specialists' task objectives are to:

- Provide targeted support to resilience projects by building relationships with project partners and addressing their technical assistance needs in coordination with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, NOAA regional teams, and others as needed. Support may include delivering training, developing products, and providing a range of other services.



- Provide targeted grant management and administrative technical assistance (also referred to as programmatic support) to resilience grant recipients by building relationships with project partners and addressing their programmatic assistance needs in coordination with other members of the team.
- Provide consistent, high-caliber support to and engagement with the project teams, the TA Team, Foundation, and OCM regional teams.

Specific Resilience Specialists will also be needed to:

- Provide program-wide (national) assistance as needed on grant programmatic issues and activities in support of the TA Team (Traverse City, MI based staff)
- Provide program-wide (national) coordination as needed for issues and activities in support of the TA Team (Charleston, SC based staff)
- Serve the functions below as the CRRC West Coast coordinator and North region coordinator (Oakland, CA and Kittery, ME based staff)
- Provide coordination and communication support across the TA Team with external service providers (Oakland, CA, Kittery, ME, Charleston, SC, and Fort Pierce, FL based staff)

In general, to accomplish these objectives, Resilience Specialists will carry out the following activities:

- Assist with assessing resilience projects' performance needs, including training, data, tools and technical expertise
- Design and facilitate meetings and workshops for meaningful engagement and peer-to-peer sharing using best practices for co-development
- Support and participate in national and regional peer-to-peer events
- Provide support to convene partners for planning, design, and implementation of adaptation efforts and for sharing lessons learned
- Provide support to workforce development to ensure enduring capacity of the projects
- Coordinate with OCM's regional staff and with a network of fellows to provide technical support to projects
- Develop outreach and educational materials around the resilience projects' work
- Connect partners in the region to enhance the resilience projects' efforts
- Assist with strategic and organizational planning
- Communicate NOAA resources, services, and expertise to regional and project partners
- Assist with documenting and communicating resilience accomplishments and culturally-relevant metrics
- Make connections as relevant across the climate sciences to inform the resilience projects' work, for example wildfire- and heat-related climate impacts
- Provide management assistance for cooperative agreements and grants

Key Skills, Experience, and Attributes

Required skills and expertise for all Resilience Specialists include:

- Close familiarity with community resilience efforts in the relevant region
- Understanding of the technical assistance needs and gaps of resilience projects in the relevant region
- Understanding of, and experience in, the relevant regional geography, context, cultures, challenges, and coastal issues
- Experience managing NOAA cooperative agreements. Ability to follow standard operating procedures and guidance documentation specifically related to NOAA grant management and administration
- Strong organizational and communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to build relationships with management, colleagues, and external partners
- Experience facilitating meetings and groups and organizing events to ensure meaningful engagement
- Experience with NOAA's Digital Coast
- Ability to pass a National Agency Check (NACI)

Highly preferred skills and expertise for all Resilience Specialists include:

- Experience with vulnerability assessment, hazard and climate adaptation, or resilience strategies
- Connections, experience, collaborations with other NOAA line offices and or other government agencies
- Experience across levels of government and/or sectors (multidisciplinary)

In addition, the following skills, experience, and expertise are preferred for specific locations.

One of the Resilience Specialists located in Oakland, CA will have:

- Masters degree with 7+ years of experience
- Experience delivering OCM's nature-based solutions training course
- Subject-matter expertise in the application of climate science to decision making, including heat and wildfire threats.

The Resilience Specialists located in Traverse City, MI will have:

- Masters degree with 11+ years experience
- Understanding of NOAA grants requirements.
- Experience with NOAA's eRA grants management system.

The Resilience Specialists located in Charleston, SC will have:

- Masters degree with 11+ years experience

Experience supporting the development of a Digital Coast and/or OCM product or training delivery

Eligibility

- All applicants must follow all applicable laws, including those related to hiring, anti-discrimination, safety regulation, security, and labor regulations.
- Competitive applicants will demonstrate past experience and success in managing staff who are affiliated with federal organizations.
- The applicant must not have a paid staff member serving on the Foundation's Board of Trustees.
- The applicant should be a U.S. organization or independent contractor in the United States or territories and cannot be a federal employee, federal government agency, or a foreign entity.
- The applicant should be able to provide a federal tax id #.

How to Apply

Application packages should be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on June 19, 2026. Please submit your application package to the Foundation through C-STAAAR—the Foundation's Collaborative System for Tracking Activities, Awards, and Reporting—using the following link: <https://marinesanctuary.smartsimple.com/>.

The C-STAAAR platform will ask individual questions about your project through separate form fields and will also include questions that allow you to upload additional materials or provide links to those materials. If your proposal is selected for funding, your agreement will be managed through the C-STAAAR platform.

Please direct all questions regarding the submission of applications to the C-STAAAR platform to support@marinesanctuary.org with the email subject line: RFP QUESTION Resilience Specialists: [Name].

Application packages must include:

- A description of the company;
- Technical expertise and capability requirements;
- Explanation of why you are qualified to complete the project;
- Short proposal and timeline for how the organization would complete the activities and statement of work outlined in this RFP;
- Detailed budget proposal (please see more details below);
- Three references;

- Additional materials to support your proposal may be uploaded as attachments to your application in the supplemental attachments section

All required application fields in C-STAAAR must be completed before submission. Applications may be saved as drafts and returned to for later submission. Any additional contributors from the same organization who will work on the proposal must be invited to and accepted into C-STAAAR. Multiple users cannot work on the proposal simultaneously.

Determinations will be made by **June 29, 2026**, and applicants notified shortly thereafter.

Detailed Budget Proposal

When creating this budget, please include the total request for year 1 (September 2026–September 2027) and the total projected cost through December 31, 2029. Please also provide as much detail as possible in the budget narrative about all costs.

Agreement Ceiling

Up to a maximum ceiling of \$5,454,539 for the total three years and one month. This contract cannot exceed \$1,769,040 on a 12-month basis.

Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated based on the submitted application package materials. Evaluation criteria will include:

- Budget: Presents a realistic and competitive budget that supports the Resilience Specialists, their supplies, and their travel throughout the period of performance. The budget should include specific costs and supporting detail.
 - Worth a maximum of 50 points out of 100 points
- Qualifications: Demonstrates relevant past experience and a proven record of hiring and managing contracted staff, preferably for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-related work.
 - Worth a maximum of 25 points out of 100 points
- Requirements: Demonstrates the ability to meet the requirements outlined in this RFP.
 - Worth a maximum of 15 points out of 100 points
- Workplan: Demonstrates a detailed plan and timeline for hiring and supporting Resilience Specialists and for communicating with the Foundation and NOAA partners.
 - Worth a maximum of 10 points out of 100 points

Budget and Payment Terms

The contractor must invoice the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation on a monthly basis.

About Us

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the official non-profit partner of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, supporting its system of 18 marine environments from Massachusetts to American Samoa and the Great Lakes to the Florida Keys. We protect these iconic places, care for marine wildlife and habitats, honor our nation's maritime history and cultural traditions, and promote the enjoyment of these public waters through a combination of coalition-building, private fundraising and federal support.

In a quarter of a century, we've expanded and deepened people's connections and access to our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes, and built partnerships with coastal communities and businesses alongside the over 629,000 square miles of public waters that belong to all Americans.

Terms & 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 reimburse costs incurred by potential offerors in preparing and submitting a proposal. In addition:

- (a) The Foundation may cancel this RFP and make no award.
- (b) The Foundation may reject any or all responses received.
- (c) Issuance of this RFP does not constitute a commitment by the Foundation to make an award.
- (d) The Foundation reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on an offeror's failure to follow the RFP instructions.
- (e) The Foundation will not compensate offerors for costs incurred in responding to this RFP.
- (f) The Foundation reserves the right to make an award based on its initial evaluation of offers without further discussion.
- (g) The Foundation may negotiate with short-listed offerors to obtain their best and final offers.
- (h) The Foundation reserves the right to order additional quantities or units under the selected offer.
- (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 formal notice to all offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the RFP.
- (k) The Foundation may elect to award only a portion of the activities described in this RFP or to make multiple awards based on those activities.



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