

USCRP FY20 Academic Funding Opportunity
Answers to Questions on Process

(updated Feb 7, 2020, **updates in blue**)
(updated February 12, 2020, **updates in red**)
(updated February 20, 2020, **updates in orange**)

General

Would you share the introductory presentation with the participants?

The webinar slides have been posted on the USCRP website (uscoastalresearch.org/2020-awards-info).

Do you envision additional opportunities in the future in these broad topical categories?

Future opportunities will be based on Federal research priorities of USCRP partner agencies as well as available funding. Currently, the budget outlook for FY21 and beyond is uncertain.

Are academic collaborations encouraged?

Yes. Disbursements of funding should be handled by the lead university, who will receive the USCRP award, and detailed in the proposed budget including overhead for the collaborating universities.

[Previous version indicated that a CESU member should take the lead; however, now any PI may lead.]

Is a sub-contract with an international academic collaborator possible?

Yes, collaborations with international academics are acceptable. There are no restrictions on USCRP grants supporting international travel for science meetings and/or collaborations.

Can I have an extended discussion with the lead federal researcher in my area of interest about my proposal to maximize the alignment between the research and the priorities?

No. Due to the overwhelming response of interested academics, Federal PIs are not available for one-to-one conversations to discuss research proposals. Please do not contact them directly, as this will place an undue reporting requirement on the PIs who are already giving much of their time to facilitate the proposal process.

Proposal Requirements

Are there limitations on who can be a PI?

The PI should be a researcher in good standing at a US institution of higher learning. The PI should be in a role that includes educating and supervising graduate students.

Are there any limitations to being co-PI on multiple proposals?

The proposals will be ranked by individual merit so there is no limitation on how many proposals a PI/co-PI can submit.

Can a PI submit different proposals to several research priorities?

Yes. Each proposal will be evaluated based on its ability to address the specific research direction and science questions outlined in the federal PI webinars.

Can a PI submit the same proposal to several research priorities?

Yes; however, proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to address the specific research direction and science questions outlined in the federal PI webinars. It is unlikely that a blanket proposal submitted to several priorities will thoughtfully address the specific needs outlined by the federal agency.

Are there any guidelines for what information is included in the biographical sketches? And if there are multiple investigators should this information be included for all investigators?

The RFP provides this information under #1 Summary of Qualifications. Yes, please include some information about co-PIs. The amount of information provided about each investigator should be relative to the amount of work she will contribute to the total effort.

Does a proposal have to include a graduate student?

The proposal will be evaluated by how well the project aligns with USCRP goals, which includes training the next generation of coastal scientists and engineers.

Can postdocs or undergraduates be supported instead of graduate students?

One of the main goals of the USCRP is to train the next generation of coastal scientists and engineers; therefore, supporting a graduate student who is developing these skills is a higher priority to the USCRP than a post-doctoral researcher who has already expertise in these areas. Encouraging STEM undergraduates into the coastal field is also important to the USCRP.

Are references and budget information included in the 6-page limit?

Yes, references and budget information must fit within the page limit.

Funding

What is the amount of funding available for individual awards?

In FY2020, the USCRP is providing up to \$5M for competitive academic awards, inclusive of indirect costs. The amount of the individual awards will be from \$100K to \$400K. The exact amount of funds for each award will be finalized in pre-award discussions/negotiations between the applicant and USCRP representatives.

What is the period of performance?

The period of performance is up to three years.

Are indirect costs allowed? If so, is there a cap on indirect costs?

Yes, indirect costs should be included in your budget estimates. While the CESU process capped indirect costs (e.g., 17.5%), the revised process allows the use of standard overhead amounts, which are generally set by the university.

Can private companies be subcontracted as consultants?

Yes, leveraging is encouraged and there are no restrictions on hiring subcontractors.

Who will fund the proposals and will they be funded as grants or contracts?

If selected for funding, the award would be facilitated as a contract through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineer Research & Development Center, on behalf of the US Coastal Research Program. The funds are 100% federal.

Is the \$400k budget a hard limit that cannot be exceeded?

Yes

Federal PIs, Science Discussions/Webinars

What is the role of the federal PI during the proposal process?

The federal PIs will host webinars to discuss with academics who are interested in submitting a proposal that addresses their research priority. The intent of this meeting is to communicate relevant background and related work, as well as to discuss fundamental science questions. The federal PI will also serve on the review panel for the research priority they identified.

What are the limits on the federal role?

Federal PIs are not allowed to collaborate on proposal preparation with a single academic. Relevant background information will be shared with the entire group who indicated interest on the specific topic. Also, federal PIs cannot review proposals before they are submitted to USCRP.

What if I am unable to attend the federal PI science meeting?

Federal PI will provide a copy of the presentation and a summary of questions asked to everyone on their list. Recorded copies of the webinar may be available by request. Please contact the federal researcher to see if this is available.

Should I contact the federal PI to discuss my proposal idea?

No, your proposal will identify the **potential** collaborators based on your topic of interest. Please do not contact the potential collaborators nor discuss any potential future collaborative tasks.

What is the role of the federal PI after awards have been made?

The awardees will work with the federal PI as collaborators. This may include, for example, site visits, joint field work, regular discussions, joint authorship on papers, meetings with stakeholders.

On the proposal submission form, there is a box for "Federal Collaborator". Can you please clarify what this means? Does this refer to the federal agency PI who held a webinar presenting their research priorities?

Yes.

Information about the CESU process and SOIs is no longer applicable.

CESU, Statements of Interest

When will the Request for Statements of Interest be announced?

The rSOI is currently being reviewed by USACE. They will be posted after approval, likely by mid-February.

Will the late announcement of the rSOI affect my ability to submit a proposal by the Feb 26 deadline?

No. The requirements for the proposal are detailed in the RFP that is currently posted on the USCRP website. The proposal is structured so that the first 2 pages include the same information that will be required in the SOI.

What is the deadline for submitting the SOIs?

The deadline for submitting SOI is 30 days after the rSOI is posted on the CESU network.

Can I collaborate with a university outside of the CESU?

Yes, the applicant must be a CESU member university but you may collaborate with non CESU universities.

Will the CESU process be handled differently than last year's funding opportunity? There was confusion about timelines due to timing of the regional CESU rSOIs postings.

Due to federal contracting requirements, the USCRP will most likely be required to follow the same rSOI posting protocol as FY19 with the rSOI posting to all CESU sites, not for example the National site only. More information will be available on this soon and emailed to those who expressed interest in this opportunity.