Reef Fish Conservation and Education Foundation

Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance

Fisheries Programs Associate

Commercial fishermen play an essential role in providing American seafood, supporting coastal communities, and contributing to the sustainable management of our nation's fisheries. Ensuring the future of this industry requires investing in the next generation of fishermen, strengthening partnerships between fishermen and researchers, and bringing industry perspectives into fisheries management.

The Reef Fish Conservation and Education Foundation, in coordination with the Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance (Shareholders' Alliance), is seeking a motivated and enthusiastic entry- or early-level professional to help advance this work.

This position offers a unique opportunity to work directly with commercial fishermen, researchers, and industry leaders while gaining hands-on experience in workforce development, cooperative research, and fisheries policy. Whether coordinating training programs for the next generation of fishermen, supporting research aboard working fishing vessels, or translating fisheries policy developments into meaningful communications, the Fisheries Programs Associate will play an important role in strengthening commercial fisheries and the communities that depend on them.

This is a one-year independent contract position with the possibility of extension pending funding availability, organizational needs, and satisfactory performance.

Position Details

- Location: Remote, with preference for candidates based in the Gulf Coast region.
- Schedule: Flexible, with an anticipated workload averaging 30-40 hours per week. Occasional evening and weekend availability may be necessary.
- Anticipated Start of Contract: As soon as practicable
- Reporting Structure: Contractor reports directly to the Director of Regional Policy and Special Projects.

- Contract Term: One year, with the possibility of extension contingent upon funding availability, organizational needs, and satisfactory performance.
- Compensation: Contract rate competitive and commensurate with experience and qualifications. Anticipated contract range is $23.00 - $26.00 per hour. Travel or other expenses necessary to execute contract deliverables will be reimbursed.
- Travel: A minimum of three trips annually within the Gulf region or elsewhere in the United States for meetings, events, and field activities.

Core Focus Areas and Responsibilities

Support and Develop the Next Generation of Commercial Fishermen (70%)

Help strengthen the future of commercial fishing by supporting programs that introduce new fishermen to the industry, develop their skills, and create opportunities for long-term careers.

- Coordinate workforce development initiatives to train and support the next generation of commercial fishermen in the Gulf.
- Build and maintain relationships with program participants, graduates, mentors, and industry partners to support career development and continued engagement in commercial fishing.
- Track participant outcomes, including employment and career advancement, and help identify opportunities to strengthen and expand program offerings.
- Contribute to grant reporting, funder communications, and outreach materials that demonstrate program accomplishments and the impact of our work.

Support innovative cooperative research opportunities (20%)

Help connect commercial fishermen and scientists through collaborative research projects that improve our understanding of fisheries and support informed management decisions.

- Work directly with commercial fishermen, universities, federal agencies, and research partners to facilitate collaboration and project implementation.
- Support research activities involving working commercial fishing vessels, including dockside visits, coordination with participating fishermen, and occasional field activities.
- Help coordinate project activities, maintain communication among partners, and ensure research milestones and deliverables are met.
- Assist in developing reports, presentations, and outreach materials that communicate project activities and findings to fishermen, partners, and other audiences.

Fisheries Policy Research and Analysis (10%)

- Monitor developments in regional and federal fisheries management, including Gulf Council activities and regulatory actions, with guidance from senior staff.
- Research fisheries policy issues, summarize meetings and regulatory developments, and help prepare communications that keep commercial fishermen informed and engaged.

What We Are Looking For

We're looking for someone who's excited to make a difference in the future of commercial fishing. The ideal candidate is self-motivated, can work independently in a remote setting, and is able to easily connect with people.

We need someone who can:

- Take ownership. Work independently, take initiative, and hold yourself accountable for delivering high-quality results.
- Build genuine relationships. Connect with commercial fishermen, researchers, and industry partners through strong communication, mutual respect, and a down-to-earth attitude.
- Stay organized and adaptable. Manage multiple projects, navigate changing priorities, and find creative solutions to challenges.
- Work a flexible schedule. Our work doesn't always fit into a traditional 9-to-5 schedule, and neither does the commercial fishing industry. Be comfortable occasionally working early mornings, evenings, or weekends when projects and industry activities require it, with flexibility to adjust your schedule accordingly.
- Be comfortable in the field. Feel just as at home on commercial fishing docks or aboard a fishing vessel as you do coordinating projects and preparing professional communications.
- Bring curiosity and fresh ideas. Ask questions, challenge assumptions, and look for opportunities to improve how we work and what we accomplish.

About Our Team

We're a small, collaborative, fully remote team that is passionate about what we do and about the future of commercial fishing. Our work environment reflects the industry we serve: hard-working, focused, and built on personal connection. We take pride in producing exceptional work and making a real impact, while giving our team members the flexibility, independence, and support to grow professionally and personally.

What makes this opportunity unique:

- Make a tangible impact. Help shape programs and initiatives that directly support commercial fishermen and the future of the industry.
- Build meaningful connections. Work alongside commercial fishing leaders across the Gulf and connect with a national network of respected fisheries organizations.
- Be part of something bigger. Contribute to initiatives that connect fishing communities across the country and help shape the future of America's commercial fishing industry.
- Grow your skills and career. Take on meaningful responsibilities, develop new skills, and gain hands-on experience across workforce development, fisheries research, and policy.

About the Organizations and Initiatives

The Shareholders' Alliance is the largest organization of commercial reef fish fishermen in the Gulf, led by and built for commercial fishermen. We are driving positive change in Gulf commercial fisheries by empowering fishermen on and off the water.

The Gulf Commercial Fisherman Program (GCFP) is a hands-on, industry-led training initiative that prepares the next generation of commercial fishermen in the Gulf by equipping entry-level deckhands with practical skills, safety training, and real-world experience aboard working fishing vessels.

The National Future Fishermen Coalition (NFFC) is a nationwide alliance dedicated to supporting the next generation of U.S. commercial fishermen and women through workforce development, collaboration, and industry advocacy.

The Reef Fish Conservation and Education Foundation works alongside the Shareholders' Alliance and its partners to advance education, cooperative research, and workforce development initiatives that strengthen commercial fisheries and fishing communities throughout the Gulf and beyond.

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field or equivalent professional experience.
- Excellent organizational and project management abilities, including event coordination.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines simultaneously.

- Strong research, analytical, and critical thinking skills.
- Willingness to travel periodically for meetings, conferences, and field activities.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working in or with the commercial fishing industry.
- Familiarity with cooperative research programs.
- Experience with stakeholder engagement, community outreach, and relationship-building.
- Experience with grant-funded programs, reporting, and evaluation.
- Knowledge of U.S. fisheries management and the Fishery Management Council process.

Apply Here

Direct questions to ashford@shareholdersalliance.org.