



NOAA Coastal Resilience Fellowship Program

Supported by the Inflation Reduction Act

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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HOW WILL THE PROCESS WORK?

**In Climate Resilience Regional Challenge proposal:
Include a paragraph expressing interest**

**During negotiation phase:
Provide more information on need and confirm interest**

**Winter 2024:
Advertise fellowship opportunities**

**Winter 2024 to 2025:
NOAA collects candidate applications**

**Spring 2025:
Candidate interviews and selection**

**Summer 2025:
Fellows start at host organization**



GENERAL INFORMATION

Q: What are the goals of the NOAA Coastal Resilience Fellowship Program?

A: The goals are to

- provide on-the-job experience, education, and training to develop the next generation of coastal resilience leaders;
- provide direct project support to awardees; and
- advance the challenge's priorities of equity and enduring capacity by directly supporting marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities.

Q: What are some things I should consider when deciding whether to host a fellow?

A: Some considerations include

- What will you want the fellow to do? The intention of the program is to provide the fellow with a meaningful developmental opportunity on the project so that they can develop skills or products that they can take into the next step of their career. The fellow's tasks should be well defined, as opposed to having them pick up unrelated tasks as they come up. We want to help build the future workforce of coastal resilience experts by providing them an opportunity for a meaningful experience.
- What qualifications are you looking for in a fellow? Are you looking for a graduate degree or PhD level fellow or undergrad, or is non-traditional education and knowledge more important to you? Would someone who has knowledge of or connections with the community, or someone who has valuable Indigenous knowledge be the best addition to your team? You could be looking for a natural scientist, a communicator, a social scientist, for example. All of these and other skills are needed in the coastal resilience field and would be appropriate backgrounds for a fellow.
- How will you mentor the fellow during their time with you? Do you have the staffing, time, ability, and desire to mentor a fellow? As we move through the process, we'll need a specific person to be named as the fellow's mentor.
- Compare the fellowship timeline to your own project timeline to make sure the timing matches up with your needs. The fellows will start almost a year after the projects are funded, so if you have a shorter project timeline, it might not make sense to host a fellow.

Q: What do hosts need to contribute?

A: Hosts will provide a specific two-year project for which the fellow can play a meaningful role. As a host, you will also need to provide office space and necessary equipment for the fellow (such as a computer and any software needed). We'll also look to you to integrate fellows into your project teams and identify mentors for the fellow.

Q: What does the mentor need to contribute?

A: Mentors will provide professional development advice and support, ensure the fellow is integrated into the project team and office, and look for opportunities for the fellow to gain skills and experience, in addition to supervising their project work. There can be a designated mentor and a different supervisor, if that works better for your project team. If one person has both those roles, we'll ask the supervisor to have mentoring-specific meetings with their fellow. The mentor will also be asked to participate in the NOAA-sponsored mentoring training, where we'll explain what we mean by mentoring in the program and set expectations for mentors. Finally, the mentor will agree to be the main point of contact with NOAA regarding the fellowship.

Q: What is the duration of the fellowship?

A: The fellowship is two years, starting in the summer of 2025 and ending in the summer of 2027. In order for the fellows to benefit from being part of a cohort of other fellows, we are having all the fellows start and end in the same timeframe.

Q: Can an applicant request more than one fellow?

A: Each applicant is limited to request one fellow for their project.

Q: What will a fellow receive?

A: Fellows will receive the following:

- Two-year position to work on a cutting-edge project
- \$42,000 per year, with locality pay based on fellowship location
- Health insurance
- Paid holidays and leave
- Travel funds, with specific amounts allocated for
 - » Project-related travel
 - » Attending the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge peer-to-peer sharing event
 - » Professional development opportunities identified by the fellow, such as trainings, conferences, meetings, or events that they identify as helping them grow professionally
- Relocation stipend, if the fellow has to relocate
- Mentoring from their host
- Networking opportunities



ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Q: Who is eligible to request a fellow?

A: All applicants who were invited to submit a full Climate Resilience Regional Challenge proposal are eligible to request a fellow. Our goal is to provide a fellow to as many awardees as possible who are interested in hosting a fellow.

Q: Who is eligible to apply for a fellowship?

A: Anyone with an interest in coastal resilience and a high school degree (or equivalency) can apply to the fellowship. Other than a high school degree, there are no minimum education or experience requirements for applicants. This is by design to increase the accessibility of the program, and so that we can better meet the needs of the hosts. Hosts can select to interview candidates who meet their education or experience needs. The program is intended for professionals early in their coastal resilience careers, but there are no specific parameters that have to be met. Fellows can have degrees or experience in environmental studies, natural resource management, marine affairs, marine science, geology, public affairs, communications, the social sciences, and more. The most important prerequisite is an interest in coastal resilience issues. To meet the goal of building capacity in the project area, a connection to or experience with the project area is a plus, but not required.

Q: Are current students eligible to apply for a fellowship?

A: This opportunity is a full-time position. The fellow is expected to work 40 hours per week and the salary reflects that. If a current student is taking a course load that allows them to work 40 hours per week, they would be eligible. We do not have the ability to offer part-time fellowships.

IN THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE REGIONAL CHALLENGE PROPOSAL

Q: What is the process for requesting a fellow?

A: When submitting your final proposal, include a sentence that states you are interested in hosting a fellow. If you have initial ideas on the general role a fellow will play, some of the qualifications that you might be looking for in a fellow, and which project partner would actually host the fellow, please include that, as well. This information should be included at the end of the Project Narrative, where you may (optionally) be requesting other NOAA technical assistance. This information, and other technical assistance requests, will not be scored as part of evaluation criteria, nor does it count toward your page limit. It is simply to make NOAA aware that you are interested in hosting a fellow. Should your proposal be selected for funding, during the negotiation phase NOAA will provide more guidance on the information we need from you, and ask you to complete a fellowship project template. See the “Post-Award” section below for more details.

Q: What should I include in the proposal?

A: At a minimum, if you know you’d like to host a fellow, include that. Having this information will help us as we develop and establish the program. If you’ve thought more about your needs, please include any initial ideas on the general role a fellow will play, some of the qualifications that you might be looking for in a fellow, and which project partner would host the fellow.

Q: Where should I include this information in my proposal?

A: You should include information about the fellowship program at the end of Project Narrative, where you are requesting other NOAA technical assistance (listed as PDF 2 in the [Application Guidance](#)). The Project Narrative has a 25-page limit, but this and other technical assistance requests you have for NOAA will not be counted toward this limit.

BUDGET

Q: Do I need to include anything in my budget regarding a fellow?

A: NOAA will cover all costs associated with hiring the fellow, with the exception of

- computer and other equipment the fellow will need; and
- office space for the fellow.

If you will need to purchase these things, please include them in your budget. NOAA will provide the fellows with travel funds, with specific amounts allocated for project-related travel, attending the peer-to-peer sharing event, and professional development opportunities.

Q: How will a fellow be paid?

A: Fellows are paid via a contract with a third-party administrator who will hire the fellows, pay the fellows, and track administrative details like timesheets, leave, holidays, and benefits. The administrator will also reimburse fellows for travel expenses and provide overall support to the fellows.



POST-AWARD

Q: If we are awarded Climate Resilience Regional Challenge funds, how will we communicate more information about what we're looking for in a fellow?

A: During the negotiation phase, NOAA will provide more guidance on the information we need from you, and ask you to complete a short fellowship project description. NOAA will provide a template to follow, and sections in this template will include

- project description of what the fellow will be working on;
- milestones and outcomes for the fellow's work;
- desired qualifications, skills of the fellow;
- who the mentor will be.

There's no required template at this point in time; it will be provided after proposals are selected for funding and we start working toward gathering more information.

Q: How will the fellowship positions be advertised?

A: NOAA and our third-party administrator will take the lead on advertising the fellowship positions. We will develop materials and messaging and work with existing partners and networks to share opportunities. We will also look to you, the hosts, to help share your own fellowship opportunities locally and regionally, since we are really interested in helping build capacity in the communities you're working with. We will look to you to share with local networks, to reach folks who may already live in or be invested in your community or region.

Q: What will candidates be asked to submit?

A: Candidate application packets will include

- resume (two-page limit);
- statement of interest (500-word limit)—we will ask candidates to address what they hope to gain from the experience and what they think they can contribute to the fellowship. We'll also ask them to highlight any ties to or special interests they have in the region, highlighting Indigenous or local knowledge and life experiences that are relevant;
- unofficial academic transcripts (or joint services transcript for veterans); and
- two professional or academic references.

Q: How will applications be collected and provided to hosts?

A: NOAA and the third-party administrator will be assisting you throughout this process, and will develop a system of gathering candidate applications for each fellowship position. Candidates will apply to a specific position. NOAA will help pre-screen the applications based on the qualifications included in your fellowship project description, and forward applications to you.

Q: How does the interview process work?

A: NOAA will look to the hosts to

- decide who to interview;
- set up interviews with top candidates and inform NOAA of the candidates you are interviewing;
- develop interview questions specific to your project needs; and
- inform NOAA when you have a top candidate(s).

Q: Does where applicants live or go to school determine what project they are eligible for?

A: Not at all. Applicants are eligible for any of the projects regardless of where they live or have studied.

Q: What is the salary for the Coastal Resilience Fellowship Program?

A: The fellowship salary is \$42,000 per year, with a locality pay factor added to the salary, depending on the location of the fellowship. All of the benefits, including salary and travel reimbursements, are administered by an outside contractor through a contract with NOAA.

Q: What other benefits, in addition to salary, are included as part of the fellowship?

A: Health insurance, relocation stipend, and travel reimbursement are included.

Q: Is housing provided for the fellow?

A: NOAA will not provide housing for the fellow, but we will look to the host to assist the fellow in identifying suitable areas to live. If you are able to provide free or reduced cost housing, while not required, it would be an approved added benefit to the fellow.

Q: What types of training and professional development will NOAA offer the fellows?

A: NOAA will provide mentoring training to both the fellows and mentors. NOAA will also offer additional professional development to the fellows on topics such as facilitation, project management, and career planning. We will also provide numerous networking opportunities for fellows throughout their two-year fellowships.

