

## **National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative**

### **2020 - 2021 Capacity Building Funding Guidance**

**Guidance Issued: July 2, 2020**

**Applications accepted on a rolling basis until April 1, 2021**

#### **Important tips/notes about this funding opportunity:**

- These funds may be useful in addressing capacity needs related to increased virtual engagement with partners, so long as the activities fall within an effort that leads to the development of a collaborative research or catalyst proposal.
- These funds are dispersed as either a contract (\$10,000) or one-time reimbursement (up to \$9,995) after activities are complete. An important distinction between these options is that indirect costs may NOT be applied to reimbursable funding.

## **Overview**

Developing collaborative, end user-driven proposals requires coordination and significant investment in time and resources. Science Collaborative capacity building funding is intended to help ease that resource burden and enhance reserves' capacity to develop and submit high-quality collaborative research and catalyst proposals in response to our requests for proposals.

This funding may be applied to a number of eligible activities related to proposal development to allow reserves to tailor the work to meet their individual needs. This opportunity is intended for capacity building activities up to one-year in duration. Reserves may apply for funds during this 2020-2021 application cycle or opt to apply in a subsequent year until 2024. A reserve may submit an individual application or partner with one or more reserves to submit a joint application.

## **Funding Amount**

Each reserve has the opportunity to receive a one-time capacity building award for up to \$10,000 between 2020 and 2024.

Reserves may opt to participate in capacity building activities by pooling resources with other reserves such that the total award amount exceeds \$10,000. They may also use portions of their allocation for multiple efforts, but the total for each reserve should not exceed \$10,000.

## **Eligibility for Funding**

This funding opportunity is open to reserve staff working in partnership (as appropriate) with applicants from United States (U.S.) academic, non-government organizations, and non-federal public sectors.

Each proposal must designate a fiduciary institution and a fiscal lead<sup>1</sup> that will receive and manage the award, if granted. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. cannot serve as the fiscal lead but are eligible to receive funds. Federal employees and agencies are not eligible to receive funding from the Science Collaborative, but may participate as unfunded team members.

## **Application Process**

Applicants should review this funding guidance and follow the directions to submit an application. Applications are being accepted and reviewed for the initial round of funding on a rolling basis until April 1, 2021. Applications include a three-page maximum narrative that describes the need and proposed activities, outputs and outcomes, team members, and appendices. Applications must be submitted through an [online form](#) accessible through the

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<sup>1</sup> In most cases, the lead is also the fiscal lead. In cases where the lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant, a team member from the fiduciary institution may serve as fiscal lead and will have ultimate responsibility for financial reporting and ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed.

[Science Collaborative website](#). Applications will be reviewed and funding decisions made within a month of the application date.

### Timeline & Key Dates

We anticipate that some reserves will be ready to apply for and use capacity building funds to prepare for the 2021 call for collaborative research proposals this fall, while other reserves may prefer to apply later, with an eye towards preparing proposals for subsequent competitions.

This year, applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until April 1, 2021. This approach is meant to help maximize access to and use of capacity building funds in a year that is particularly challenging and dynamic due to COVID-19 impacts.

In subsequent years, we anticipate setting a single, annual application deadline of April 1 with review and funding decisions occurring by May, as outlined in the table below. The last application deadline will be April 1, 2024.

Date	Activity
<b>July 2, 2020 - April 1, 2021</b>	2020-2021 Applications accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis
<b>April 1, 2022</b>	2022 Applications Due
<b>May 2022</b>	2022 Funding notifications
<b>April 1, 2023</b>	2023 Applications Due
<b>May 2023</b>	2023 Funding notifications
<b>April 1, 2024</b>	2024 Applications Due
<b>May 2024</b>	2024 Funding notifications

## About Capacity Building Funds

### Eligible Activities

This funding may be applied to a number of eligible activities related to the development of a proposal.

Examples of eligible activities and expenses include, but are not limited to:

- *Personnel time* – for example, to support staff time to coordinate and facilitate workshops or meetings with end users and researchers to elicit and advance collaborative research ideas;
- *Training* – for example, collaboration, facilitation, or proposal development training;
- *Convening of partners* – travel and meeting expenses, e.g., travel, food, meeting space rental and supplies related to the convening of potential proposal collaborators;
- *Expenses associated with increasing capacity to work with partners remotely* – for example, webcam, microphone, web collaboration software licenses, or other related supplies under \$5,000; and
- *Conducting a needs assessment* – a structured needs assessment process designed to elicit and explore research opportunities that are responsive to the needs of end user partners.

Capacity building funds CANNOT be used for:

- Data collection, except for the purposes of a needs assessment;
- Equipment purchase over \$5,000; or
- Professional proposal writing services.

A reserve may choose to dedicate the entirety of the funds to develop a single or multiple research and/or catalyst proposals to the Science Collaborative.

Cross-reserve capacity building activities are eligible and encouraged. In such cases, each reserve involved should contribute to the development of a joint proposal.

This funding may include a Science Transfer component but is not intended to support the development of Science Transfer proposals alone.

Examples of desired outcomes resulting from capacity building activities include but are not limited to the following:

- The reserve is better positioned and prepared to submit a needs-based, competitive Science Collaborative proposal;
- Existing relationships among the reserve(s) and their partners, including end users, are strengthened as a result of purposeful and deliberate engagement; and
- New relationships are developed between reserve staff and potential collaborators, including end users.

### Requirements

Eligible efforts **must**:

- Demonstrate responsiveness to reserve capacity needs as they relate to collaborative science proposal development; and
- Support the scoping and/or development of a user-driven Science Collaborative research and/or catalyst proposal(s) that meets reserve management needs.

Outputs of capacity building efforts **must** include the following:

- A framework for developing a Science Collaborative research and/or catalyst proposal(s), and
- A final report summarizing how the funds increased the capacity of the reserve to develop a Science Collaborative proposal and any other related accomplishments.

The applicant **must** request to receive capacity building funds in one of the following ways:

1. **Contract:** In this case, the fiscal agent for the capacity building grant will enter into a contractual agreement with the University of Michigan; the fiscal agent organization may submit monthly invoices for approved expenses throughout the duration of the grant. The fiscal agent organization may choose to charge indirect charges in the grant budget.
2. **Reimbursement:** In this case, the Science Collaborative will issue a one-time reimbursement to the reserve or the identified fiscal agent organization for approved expenses. Reimbursements will only be made to organizations or agencies, not individuals, and will only be made after all approved expenses have been incurred and a detailed invoice is presented to the Science Collaborative. The Science Collaborative can only reimburse up to \$9,995 in expenses.<sup>2</sup> Indirect charges may NOT be applied to reimbursable funding.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a contracting threshold set by third-party administrators.

## Application Requirements

To apply for capacity building funding, reserves must submit an application to the NERRS Science Collaborative. Applications must be submitted online at <http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/47301>.

To submit your application, go to the [application page](#) and click “Apply”. Once you have logged in<sup>3</sup>, you will need to complete an online form and upload a PDF of your application. Your application will be submitted once you hit “save”. You will receive a confirmation email when you have successfully saved/submitted your application. If you do not receive a confirmation email, your application was not saved properly and you should resave or contact us directly at [NERRS-info@umich.edu](mailto:NERRS-info@umich.edu)

**Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through April 1, 2021.**

Applications must be provided as a single PDF file that includes the following:

### Title page

- 1) Title of Capacity Building Effort
- 2) Lead (primary contact for the effort)
  - a) Title / Position
  - b) Institution
  - c) Telephone Number
  - d) Postal Mailing Address
  - e) E-mail Address
- 3) Additional team members (anyone receiving resources or contributing significant resources to the proposed activities) – Name, institution, telephone, email, and role in capacity building effort.
- 4) Fiduciary Information – Indicate the institution that would receive and manage the grant contract or submit the one-time reimbursement request. Please provide a point of contact, including email address, to receive fiscal questions.
- 5) Name of Reserve(s) – Identify the reserve or reserves partnering in this capacity building effort.

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<sup>3</sup> You will need a U-M Account or Friend Account to start an application. You will be prompted to login or create an account when you access the application page.

- 6) Application Type – Indicate if you are applying for contractual funding or reimbursable funding.
- 7) Budget Request – Requested dollar amount. The total budget may not exceed \$10,000/reserve for contractual funding and \$9,995/reserve for reimbursable funding.
- 8) Duration – Indicate start and end dates. Capacity building efforts may start as early as August 1, 2020 and must end no later than 12 months after the start date.

### Narrative (Up to 3 pages)

Organize your narrative using the following headers:

- 1) Description – Describe the capacity need and proposed activities that will address this need. Clearly explain how the activities better position the reserve to submit a user-driven collaborative research and/or catalyst proposal(s) to the Science Collaborative that meets reserve management needs.
- 2) Outputs (specific products to be developed with the funds) – Describe the planned outputs; outputs must include, but are not limited to, a framework for developing a Science Collaborative proposal(s) and final report.
- 3) Desired Outcomes (consequences of the proposed activities) – Describe the desired outcomes resulting from the proposed activities.
- 4) Team Members – Provide a list of team members and their roles.

### Appendices:

- I. Timeline – Using the [timeline template](#), provide the following:
  - A. Start and end dates of the proposed activities. Capacity building efforts may start as early as August 1, 2020 and must end no later than 12 months after the start date. When determining start date for contract applications, please anticipate receiving contract award details approximately 6 weeks after notice of approval of your application.
  - B. A schedule with key activities and tasks that will help document progress and the development and completion of outputs.
- II. Budget & Budget Narrative
  - A. Budget: Use the [budget template](#) to provide an itemized estimate of all costs. The total budget may not exceed \$10,000/reserve for contractual funding and \$9,995/reserve for reimbursable funding.

B. Budget Narrative - Provide a budget narrative to justify expenses in all budget categories. Please note the following:

1. Eligible expenses include personnel time, travel, meeting space rental, meeting supply purchase, web collaboration software licenses, and other expenses related to the convening of the collaborative team. Capacity building funds may not be used to purchase equipment greater than \$5,000.
2. Personnel costs shall be broken out by team member, including number of months and percentage of time requested.
3. Travel costs must be broken out by number of people traveling, destination, and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Domestic and foreign travel should be itemized separately. Foreign travel must comply with the Fly America Act which limits the use of foreign flag carriers. For more information, go to <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191>.
4. Indirect costs may not be applied to reimbursable funding.
5. For contract proposals only:
  - a) Overhead may be charged up to the fiscal institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate. If an institution does not have a federally negotiated indirect rate, they are able to use the *de minimis* rate of 10%.
  - b) If applicable, a separate budget and budget narrative are required for each subcontract.
  - c) The fiduciary institution must provide a letter of commitment approving the proposal submission, including approval of any subcontracts included in the proposal. A letter of commitment is also required from each subcontracting institution. There is no standard form for this letter.

III. Reserve Manager Support – If the lead is someone other than a reserve manager, applications must include a signed statement of support from the relevant reserve manager. If more than one reserve is part of the capacity building effort, each reserve manager must submit a letter of support.

## **Application Review Process**

Applications will be reviewed internally by Science Collaborative staff and the NOAA Program Officer. If necessary, the Science Collaborative will provide feedback and comments that must be addressed before funding is granted. We expect to notify applicants of funding decisions within 30 days of receiving a complete application for a capacity building award.

### **Contractual grants:**

Once approved for funding, the Science Collaborative will immediately initiate the contracting process. This process takes approximately 4-6 weeks; however, the reserve may begin incurring approved expenses on the start date, if the fiscal agent organization allows.

### **Reimbursable grants:**

Once approved for funding, the reserve may begin expending funds for the approved capacity building activities. However, the reserve or designated fiscal agent may only request reimbursement after all approved expenses have been incurred. Instructions for requesting reimbursement will be provided with the award notification.

### **Questions regarding this funding guidance?**

**Email:** Written questions regarding this funding opportunity should be submitted to [nerrs-info@umich.edu](mailto:nerrs-info@umich.edu).

**Phone:** You may also direct questions to Lynn Vaccaro (734-763-0056) and Maeghan Brass (734-763-0727).

**Website:** More information about the NERRS Science Collaborative can be found at [www.nerrsciencecollaborative.org](http://www.nerrsciencecollaborative.org).